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Contents


The Week ..... 338

Editorials

Al Smith's Dilemma ..... 341
Can Floods Be Prevented? ..... 343

General Articles

The Economic Conference..Ernest Minor Patterson 346
Mexico's Bid for Supremacy in Central America.. ..... Linton Wells 348
Italy, 1927 ..... Ernest Hemingway 350
Washington Notes ..... T. R. B. 353
Sophocles and Sierra ..... Stark Young 354
The Heritage of Impressionism.... Lewis Mumford 355

Correspondence ..... 357

Reviews of Books

Two Women ..... Virginia Woolf 358
Dictatorship, Red or White ..... Jerome Davis 359
Miss Hull and Mrs. Scott ..... Robert Morss Lovett 360
A Better Plan for Farm Relief ..... George Soule 361
Mr. Chapman's Dante ..... Edmund Wilson 361
Lud-in-the-Mist ..... R. M. L. 363


## The Week

THE more we learn about the great Mississippi flood, the more appalling its consequences are seen to be. The public has responded generously to the appeal of the Red Cross for a second five million dollars, but the sum raised by private charity will only go a small way toward relieving the suffering of the victims, which has lately been increased in some regions by the terror of earthquakes and tornadoes. A third of a million persons live in the areas affected. Of these, many have lost everything they have in the world. The work of rehabilitation will be as difficult and expensive, in proportion, as was the restitution of the devastated areas in France and Belgium after the War. It seems altogether likely that a heavy federal appropriation will be necessary, and that it cannot wait for the session of the next Congress in December. President Coolidge is reluctant to call a special session, for reasons of his own; but the plight of the flood sufferers is so serious that no other consideration can properly be weighed against it.

WASHINGTON has won a striking victory in regard to Chinese policy. Great Britain has at last yielded, with what reluctance can only be surmised, to the American policy which refuses to use force against the Chinese. Sir Austen Chamberlain, in a speech in the House, has explained why Hankow is not to be bombarded, the British concession there forcibly recaptured, and the Yangtse blockaded. He regards the Hankow government as now only a vestigial remnant. In his eyes it is dominated by Communists, who deliberately ordered the violence against the foreigners at Nanking in order to embroil Chiang Kai-shek with the great powers. He looks forward hopefully to its extinction in the near future, and the rise of Chiang Kai-shek's more conservative government at Nanking. In the case of his prophecies, it is clear that Sir Austen's wish is father to his thoughts, and what he says need not be taken too seriously. We are confident that time will vindicate the wisdom of the American policy; and we feel that President Coolidge and Secretary Kellogg, with whom the New Republic has so often disagreed, deserve the highest credit for courageously sticking to their course despite pressure which must have been of the most formidable sort. They were aided by the moderation and far-sighted, conciliatory attitude on the part of Japan, which saw the realities of the Chinese situation when Downing Street was unable to do so.

THE civil war in Nicaragua now comes to an end. Colonel Henry L. Stimson, former Secretary of War, who was sent to that country as President Coolidge's representative, has arranged a truce which means the end of the fighting. His proposal was that both sides should lay down their arms, that the Conservative President, Diaz, should remain in office for the remainder of his term, or until January 1, 1929, that a fair and free election should be held under American auspices, a year hence, and that, in the meantime, the Liberals were to have some degree of participation in the Managua government. The Sacasa group demurred at the retention of Diaz for another nineteen months. Thereupon, according to their story, they were told that they must accept the terms, or the United States


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Marines would be used to disarm them by force. As to whether this type of coercion was used, Washington remains discreetly silent; but it may safely be taken for granted that the allegations of the Liberals are substantially correct. Their leaders have repeatedly said that they would yield only if the United States took the field against them. It is well known that if this country had kept its hands off, the Liberal revolution would in all probability have succeeded some time ago. We sold arms and ammunition to Diaz on long credits; we made a neutral zone of every important city which the Liberals held, or seemed likely to capture. We retained the railways exclusively for the use of the Diaz troops. Even with all this assistance, the puppet president whom we had set up was unable to win his war until Colonel Stimson stepped in and won it for him.

THE bloodshed is ended, and that, at least, is something to be thankful for. Open intervention, such as we are now witnessing, is in our judgment preferable to the furtive and underhanded assistance we have been giving Diaz. The casualty rate in the Conservative-Liberal struggle was appallingly high, and, in view of our policy, the loss of life was utterly needless. At the same time, it would be folly to think that our action has in any degree restored our shattered prestige in Central and South America. The action we have now taken gives the lie to the repeated protestations that we would interfere only "to protect American life and property." Our policy is seen to be continuous with that which we pursued from 1912 to 1925, during all of which time we foisted upon the Nicaraguan people a government which they did not want, and kept it in power by the bayonets of American Marines. The problem of our relations with Central America is, to be sure, one of enormous difficulty, and it is far too simple and easy an explanation to attribute all the actions of our government to "economic imperialism." Yet, after giving Messrs. Coolidge and Kellogg all the credit for good intentions to which they are entitled, it remains true that they have acted with unparalleled maladroitness in working out their policy; and have thereby, in large degree, defeated their own ends.

IN an article printed elsewhere in this issue, Mr. Linton Wells depicts the whole of Central America as an arena in which is being fought out a contest between Mexico and the United States for political supremacy. In his opinion, Mexico is coming out on top. If such a contest is taking place, and Mexico is coming out on top, it is time for the State Department to consider seriously what the final result of the continuation of this conflict will be. It seems absurd that Mexico, without an effective army, without a navy, impoverished and disorderly, can contest the supremacy of the all-powerful United States in Central America. If Mexico is getting the better of the conflict, the people of Central America must fear the power of the United States and must look to Mexico as the only state which is capable of putting up even a feeble resistance against the interests and demands of the Yankee Colossus. By pursuing a policy of prestige between the Rio Grande and Panama, the State Department has inevitably created an atmosphere in which its policy will be opposed by a policy of prestige. Unless one or the other gives way, an armed conflict can hardly be avoided. We hope, however, that the people of this country will have the good sense and forbearance to avoid it by seeking an international sanction for our attempt to bring order and security to the Caribbean peoples.

THREE important events in the history of the Sacco-Vanzetti case have occurred during the past week. The first of these is the formal appeal for executive clemency, made to Governor Fuller by Vanzetti on behalf of his comrade and himself. Sacco, as a result of his long years of confinement during which he has been confronted always with the prospect of going to the electric chair, is in a state of mind which can hardly be described as normal. He refused at the last moment, and despite all urging, to affix his signature. The appeal, a remarkable document, was entirely written by Vanzetti, except that his counsel corrected his English here and there. It reviews much of the evidence upon which the two men were found guilty, discusses the conduct of Judge Thayer, explains the theoretical position of Sacco and Vanzetti as philosophic anarchists, and finally asks "a public investigation of our case by able and disinterested men. . . . We would not have you believe," Vanzetti adds,

> that we are asking for mercy or for anything but justice, or that we would purchase our lives by the surrender of our principles or of our self-respect.
>
> Men condemned to die may be forgiven for plain speaking. . . . In the long run the victims of public injustice suffer less than the government which inflicts the penalty. We can die but once, and the pang of death will be but momentary; but the facts which show injustice cannot be obliterated. They will not be forgotten, and through the long years to follow they will trouble the conscience of those whose intolerance has brought us to our death, and of generations of their descendants. A mistake of justice is a tragedy. Deliberate injustice is an infamy.

We do not see how anyone can read Vanzetti's statement and fail to be powerfully impressed by it. The facts which it recites strengthen the contention that these men did not have a fair trial; and its whole tenor and spirit strongly suggest that they are innocent. We agree with Heywood Broun, columnist of the New York World, that Vanzetti does not write and talk like a guilty man. This is, of course, an emotional reaction, without weight in a court of law. Fortunately, it is accompanied by corroboration in the form of evidence which cannot fail to be taken seriously.

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AMONG this corroborative evidence, supporting the contention that Sacco and Vanzetti did not have a fair trial, is a group of affidavits dealing with the conduct of Judge Thayer during the trial, which has been laid before Governor Fuller. Elizabeth R. Bernkopf, who reported the case for the International News Service, swears Judge Thayer told her that the attorney for the defense, Mr. Moore, was "a long-haired anarchist" and that he, the Judge, had "no sympathy with the kind of people who were supporting the defense." John Nicholas Beffel, of the Federated Press, swears that the Judge told him, "You wait till I give my charge to the jury. I'll show 'em." Frank B. Sibley, of the Boston Globe, swears Judge Thayer said, "I'll show them that no long-haired anarchist from California can run this court," and that he referred to the counsel for the defense as "those damned fools." Mrs. Lois Rantoul, who covered the trial for the Boston Federation of Churches, swears that the Judge asked her how the trial was going and what she thought of the government's case. On her saying that she was not convinced the defendants were guilty, he "expressed dissatisfaction both by words, gestures, tone of voice and manner. He said that after hearing both arguments and his charge I would certainly feel differently."

ROBERT C. BENCHLEY, dramatic editor of Life, swears that a friend of his, Loring Coes of Worcester, Mass., repeated to him a conversation with Judge Thayer in which the latter referred to Sacco and Vanzetti as "those bastards down there," called them "Bolsheviki who were trying to intimidate him," and threatened "that he would get them good and proper." (Mr. Coes, we understand, denies that he made the statement Mr. Benchley attributes to him.) Finally, George U. Crocker, a well known Boston financier, says that during the trial Judge Thayer talked to him several times about the case, in such terms as to cause Mr. Crocker to say, "I know that Judge Thayer was not an impartial judge in this case. . . . He showed what appeared to me clearly to be bias against the defendants. I tried my best to avoid these conversations and I told the head waiter at the club to see to it that I was not put with him again at meals."

THESE affidavits are impressive enough; they demonstrate, we submit, not only the desirability of a review of this case but of impeachment proceedings against the Judge. They have now been supplemented by a formal plea to Governor Fuller for a commission of inquiry, signed by fourteen members of the faculty of Columbia Law School, nine from the Yale Law School and six from the Law School of the University of Kansas. Thirty-two other members of the law faculties of Cornell, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Oklahoma, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio and Texas, who did not have time to read and approve the wording of the petition, have authorized the use of their names as concurring in its general purpose. These eminent legal authorities point out that, contrary to the general belief, the Supreme Court of Massachusetts has not passed upon the facts and that only a single judge has ever weighed the credibility of the important new evidence. The signers address Governor Fuller, the statement says, "in the vigorous faith that an inquiry to determine whether the judicial institutions have done justice in this case is but the utilization of the powers vested in your office against such a contingency as has arisen. We address you in the vigorous faith that such an inquiry will be a well-spring from which, however such an inquiry may eventuate, the judicial institutions of Massachusetts and of the country at large will draw strength and the trust and the reverence that is their due." We should like to hear the comment on this statement by Dean John H. Wigmore of the Law School of Northwestern University. A few days ago he declared in a formal statement that Professor Felix Frankfurter of Harvard Law School, in fighting on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti, had "knowingly" enlisted in support of men who are "members of a powerful international fraternity or cabal or gang," and that this international organization was alone responsible for the effort to secure a rehearing of the evidence. Will he now include these sixty-one other professors in law schools in his allegation? Or will he admit that it was a cruel slander?

IT was rude of Mr. Churchill to butt into the little domestic argument between Secretary Mellon and the Princeton professors, but since the argument concerned the affairs of Mr. Churchill's government, he felt privileged to supply his view of the facts. Mr. Mellon had said that whereas we paid cash for supplies bought abroad, the Allies gave us promissory notes only for the supplies they bought here. When they now want these notes cancelled, they ignore the fact that our cash payments cannot be remitted. Mr. Churchill replies that the cash Great Britain received for our purchases there was applied to new British purchases in this country, and after these ceased, to reduction of the British debt to us. Thus the balance which Britain owes us is really a net balance, resulting from the cancelling out of our cash purchases. Ignoring unimportant technicalities, this is mere word juggling. What Mr. Churchill says is, in effect, that charging us cash for the things the British provided us with in their own country was not like really charging us for them, because they spent the dollars in America for more things—as if there were any real difference between charging us in dollars or in things! Such a contention cannot be taken seriously.

MR. CHURCHILL also states that Great Britain has not received, and will not receive until September, 1928, sufficient sums from reparations and the debts of the other Allies to her, in order to balance

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the payments on account of her debt to the United States. This contention Mr. Mellon admits; his failure to do so in the first place was due to a "typographical error." Printers and stenographers are responsible for much, but a typographical error of this magnitude is a bit weakening to the Secretary's case. Up to this point the whole exchange seems an excellent illustration of the futility of arguing about the debts on the grounds of whether they are justly due. The moral issues concerned turn out under analysis to be so complex as to evaporate; they are really subsidiary to the question whether the Allies can pay without more sacrifice than we ought to demand of any nation. If they could, little interest would be aroused anywhere by a contention that the debts are not just. For the Allies and the United States, even during the War, did not think themselves to be, and did not behave as if they were, a strictly communistic community sharing all their possessions, losses, aims and dangers. The fact remains that now the United States is the ultimate creditor and Germany the ultimate debtor. In 1928 we shall see whether Germany can meet her reparations schedule in full; if, as is anticipated, she cannot, the bottom of the pyramid will be knocked out and a general revision must take place.

## Al Smith's Dilemma

GOVERNOR Smith of New York has, since his reëlection last fall, gradually increased from an extremely doubtful to an extremely promising candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination. At the same time he is, as the New Republic recently pointed out, the only prominent candidate of either party who can in any real sense be called a progressive. It is, consequently, worth while to inquire what his advantages and disadvantages as a presidential candidate are, and how far progressives can reasonably count on him for aid and comfort.

Any Democratic candidate for the presidency, as compared to almost any Republican candidate, will start the race in 1928 with comparatively poor prospects of success. A considerable majority of the voters tend to be Republicans and, accidents apart, no Democrat will have a chance of being elected, unless his opponents are divided. Governor Smith owes the improved outlook for his nomination to his strength in a few eastern states plus the desperate predicament of his party. It needs a political wonder-worker to lead its members out of the wilderness and to offer them once again a taste of the milk and honey of the federal offices. He is the only wonder-worker on the horizon. If the Democratic party had any other promising candidate, the dry Protestant faction would not hesitate to cultivate its grievance against him for blocking the nomination of McAdoo in 1924. Only the lack of a possible alternative will prevent it from piling up a one-third vote of irreconcilables in the convention. Mr. McAdoo's henchmen will, so it now seems, fail to persuade his less embittered opponents to carry the fight against him to the ultimate limit. For if the party did adopt this course, it would extinguish its chance of success in 1928 and probably beyond. It would be equivalent to suicide.

Assuming that Governor Smith can be nominated, it is still difficult to figure out how he can be elected. If the opposition in the party to his nomination is overcome, he can presumably count upon the usual solid block of electoral votes from the South. In addition, he can probably carry New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Connecticut and Maryland. On the other hand, he is likely to lose one or two border states which went to Davis, and none but an optimistic statistician can credit him with the forty or fifty electoral votes which would still separate him from the White House. It is futile to speculate for the present whether or how he can secure the support of these indispensable additional states. His chance of victory will depend, not upon local conditions, but upon the outcome of his general strategy. A discussion of his chances of being elected must, for the present, turn upon a calculation as to the probable success of a strategic plan which at the present time is wholly obscure and profoundly doubtful.

Governor Smith's most serious handicap is, of course, the make-up and the record of his party, as they bear upon its task as the official opponent of the Republicans. Since the bitter dissension of the Convention of 1924 and their crushing defeat in the fall of that year, the Democrats have acted as if they were already beaten. During the two sessions of the last Congress, they tried to cultivate popularity by being more Republican than the Republicans. They agreed with the Republicans about all those questions such as taxation, in respect to which the Republicans agreed with one another, while they differed from other Democrats about those questions such as farm relief and prohibition, which aroused differences among the Republicans. Their complacent attitude toward the recent exploits of aggressive Republican imperialism in Nicaragua and Mexico is the final proof of their pathetic resignation as a fighting alternative to Coolidge Toryism. Is there any way in which Al Smith can stimulate this bankrupt Democracy to believe in itself as something different from Republicanism and, consequently, as something more progressive than Republicanism?

If there is a way, it is bound to be prolonged, thorny and precarious. William J. Bryan labored in this vineyard from 1896 to 1912, but without producing any succulent grapes. Woodrow Wilson took the task over and used the party to some good purpose, but he never succeeded in converting its other leaders or its rank and file into progressives. Neither did he succeed in developing out of the "New Freedom" a progressive creed, program and psychology for a new democracy. Since his death, it has relapsed into a mental and moral lethargy similar to its state of mind during the twenty years which succeeded the Civil War. The Democratic

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leaders in Congress have been recently, with a few exceptions, indistinguishable from Republicans in their worship of the powers that be. We cannot discern any domestic issue with a progressive import which Al Smith can seize and sharpen in order to separate Democracy from Republicanism. He cannot feed his anemic party with strong meat without taking the chance of throwing it into convulsions. Neither will the American people for the present take any more kindly to a progressive tonic than will the Democratic party. He will have to improvise a good fighting cause, if at all, almost in a vacuum.

There is prohibition, of course, with which his own career in national politics is particularly identified. It is certainly an issue, not entirely unprogressive, on which he could pick up a fierce fight with the Republicans, and there is, in our opinion, much to be said for an attempt by him, even though it failed, to force it on his party. But he would, in that case, be building for 1932 out of materials which were furnished by the ruins of 1928. As a candidate for the coming campaign who would be nominated because he was supposed to have a chance of election, he will have to lay in a store of blotting paper with which to mitigate his wetness. On no other condition will he be nominated. At some point in the proceedings of the next convention, enough of his dry opponents will take revenge upon him by offering to vote for his nomination, provided he will not insist on committing the national Democratic party to the New York prohibition program. The condition will be as difficult to accept as it will be to refuse. Yet will he not have to accept? A presidential candidate, who, if elected, would be responsible for the execution of the laws, can hardly run on a prohibition plank which implies the nullification, with the consent of the national government, of a part of the federal Constitution. Governor Smith can purchase the nomination only by a compromise which means that the Democrats, like the Republicans, would straddle the issue. He could subsequently explain to the voters that he was opposed to national prohibition and would, so far as he could, try to get rid of it. But, as President, he could not expressly connive at nullification and, as candidate for the Democratic nomination, he could not ignore or dispense with the dry faction in his party.

Governor Smith is, also, not very well placed to capitalize for the benefit of the Democrats the agrarian hostility to Mr. Coolidge. He is himself essentially the product of the Bowery and Broadway. He has no particular understanding of the problems of American agriculture or the grievances of the farmer. His own party is as deeply divided about the nature of a remedial policy as are the Republicans. It has, in its traditional opposition to a high protective tariff, an issue which has some bearing on the plight of the farmer and which might, in existing circumstances, win some votes in the rural districts, but it would be far from popular with Governor Smith's urban following. Moreover, the Democrats themselves, after their experiences in 1893 and 1913, are afraid to grasp firmly the nettles of an anti-tariff agitation. In any event, the Republicans will not allow the Democrats to reap a decisive political benefit from the agricultural discontent in the West. Should Al Smith be nominated and enjoy any prospect of election, the Republicans will manage to soothe the feelings of the western agrarians. It would be as necessary for Coolidge or any other Republican candidate to keep the West in line as it would for Al Smith to keep the South in line. It was the defection from Hughes of the far West which reëlected Wilson in 1916.

But Al Smith's gravest difficulty in setting up a fighting alternative to Coolidge Republicanism is created by the close relation between Republican politics and business, and the necessity which he will have to face of challenging the health of that relation. The Republicans have, during the past seven years, come to stand more explicitly and consciously than ever before for government in the interest of property and business, and particularly in the interest of large properties and big business. If Al Smith is going to build up and to lead a militant opposition to them, he must concentrate his attack on the most vulnerable and characteristic aspects of this plutocracy. Yet, as a practical politican, he cannot in the near future safely and effectively travel very far in this direction. No doubt, a substantial proportion of the American voters are hospitable to certain kinds of progressive propaganda, but, after their previous disappointments, these doubters and rebels are disposed to take refuge in skepticism and indifference. Except in the case of the farmers, there are not as many outstanding economic grievances as there were twenty years ago. The American people as a whole are still worshiping at the shrine of the great, fat, grinning God Prosperity, and they are more afraid of losing his favor than they are of any curse that can possibly descend upon them. In 1924, the Republicans won an overwhelming victory by persuading the voters that the greatest of all their gods was in danger of being violated. There is no reason to believe that, if Al Smith started in the near future a serious attack on the Republican association between good business and bad politics, he would have any better chance than La Follette proved to have, of persuading the American people to run the risk of tampering with what they took to be their own prosperity.

This brings us to the heart of Al Smith's dilemma. The circumstances of his personal situation and that of his party call for an aggressive campaign to discredit Republicanism and to capture the popular imagination with the combination between a new leader and a new cause. He is known to the voters outside of New York only as a political wonder-worker with doubtful Tammany antecedents. It is his job to convert curiosity into confidence and to supply them with a sufficient motive for preferring

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him to Mr. Coolidge. In order to get elected, he would have to win the support of millions of men and women who voted in 1924 both for La Follette and for Coolidge. The Democratic party can furnish him with an organization and the usual minimum of Democratic electoral votes, but in campaigning for these mauve and pink votes it is more of a handicap than a help. It is composed of two discordant factions (the southern agrarians and the northern wage-earners) which he will have to drive in double harness, and it functions as an essentially lifeless machine, wholly devoid of political vitality and morale, which exists in order to divide state and federal offices with the Republicans. During the next fifteen months, he will have to select a national following for himself from among the progressive Republicans without disconcerting his two-faced and demoralized party. Apparently, it can be done only by a *tour de force*. There is no popular issue which he can sharpen and mobilize as a weapon. If he tries to improvise and establish an issue, the chances are against him. Yet if he does not soon start an aggressive campaign against intrenched Republicanism, he will be doing nothing to introduce himself to the American people as the progressive Democratic Messiah or to overcome the terrific inertia which will count in favor of his opponent—particularly if that opponent should be Mr. Coolidge.

The dilemma which we have just been sketching is, in our opinion, both real and dangerous, but it would be unwise for Governor Smith's friends to become apprehensive about it and to press on him the need of forcing his way out. The dilemma calls for candid recognition rather than for early and importunate action. He must, in any event, wait until the fall before deciding how to proceed. If at the end of this breathing space, nothing has happened to muffle either horn of the dilemma, he will be forced to march and to choose his direction. But the alternatives will be less contradictory and the choice less difficult and dangerous, if he can take a long and a large view of his strategic problem. His worst difficulties are the result of lack of time. He needs many years and many occasions in order to make the kind of impression on the American people that he has upon the people of New York. But he can, if he will, take more time. He can fight the campaign of 1928, not necessarily with the expectation or intention of losing, but with the prospect that, if he does lose, he will have started something which will enable him to carry on the fight during the next four years and, perhaps, to renew it under more favorable conditions in 1932.

Only by an enlarged and prolonged strategy of this kind can Al Smith be elected President of the United States as the leader of a progressive party or a body of public opinion. During the intervening years, he will have to learn a good deal about the scope of his task of building up a political rival to plutocratic Republicanism, and American public opinion will have to learn even more, but he is not the man to shirk difficulties. The job which confronts the opponents of Coolidge Republicanism belongs to angels rather than fools, though fools will surely rush in. Al Smith has the makings in him of a wiser statesman and an abler leader than he now is. He is self-educated, and he has not ceased his work of self-education. He is a progressive by personal experience and growth. He has a realistic intelligence, which is well equipped to devise a new political and economic program for progressives, whenever the gods will permit a baby with that pedigree to be born. He represents a mobile, elastic and increasingly self-conscious ingredient in American opinion (the inter-racial democracy of the large cities) which, whatever its defects, is not engaged in secreting intellectual and moral obstacles to progressivism. He has a genuine understanding of the people among whom he has grown up, and a lively desire to contribute to their welfare. His popularity is, within the area of his personal influence, unique in American political life. Yet he is nothing of a demagogue—less so than Theodore Roosevelt or Woodrow Wilson. It is something essential in him which speaks to the people—not something acquired or forced. In spite of the handicaps of his present origin and surroundings, he is for all these reasons a political leader of unique and extraordinary promise. It may be that the promise will not be fulfilled. The task may be impossible. He may develop in the arena of international politics infirmities which have not as yet been revealed. But progressives have every reason not, of course, thoughtlessly to follow him, but for the present to trust his good faith and to make allowance for the seriousness of his difficulties, while at the same time watching his progress with a sustained and close attention and a not too eager and impatient expectation.

## Can Floods Be Prevented?

THE flood in the Mississippi Valley is one of the great disasters in our history. From 6,000,000 to 7,000,000 acres are in the region affected, the population of which is at least 350,000 persons. Of these, some two-thirds have been evacuated to refugee camps, and the other third remains living precariously in the upper stories of houses, or camping out on knolls, inadequately sheltered and menaced by starvation and epidemic. The number of dead will never be known exactly, but is at least 300; and the damage to property is estimated at various amounts from $200,000,000 up. Since a great part of this comes from the pockets of poor people who have lost all they have in the world, the work of rehabilitation will require huge sums, which are not now in sight. Fields must be replanted, cattle and work animals replaced, houses repaired or substitutes built, roads reconstructed. This money must be provided, either by private charity or through a federal appropri-

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ation which, if it is to be made soon enough to be of any use, will require a special session of Congress.

It is only natural that people should be asking whether such disasters as this are in fact preventable. On this point, it can be said definitely that the measures taken in the past have certainly been inadequate. These have consisted almost exclusively of building levees, on which about $168,000,000 has been spent by the federal government since 1879. Every time a bad flood has occurred—and they have come at an average interval of only six years—the levees have been built higher. Yet almost every time, the next flood has broken through or has gone over the top of the dike. This has been true of the three great floods of recent years: those of 1912, 1922 and 1927. It is inevitable that people should begin to ask whether the federal and state authorities, who are pinning all their hopes to the levee system, are not making a mistake—whether their attempt at a cure does not in reality aggravate the disease?

Before the coming of the white man, the Mississippi frequently overflowed its banks, in the regions near its mouth. A vast area went under water temporarily, with the melting of the snows in the north and the coming of the spring rains. Not only was this true, but the river had its own "spillways," or extra outlets to the sea, through which the surplus water ran off. The struggle with the river in the past century, and particularly since 1879, has been a record of continuing attempts to reclaim lands in the flood area. The natural spillways have been cut off. The levees, of which there are now 2,500 miles, have been built ever higher and stronger. The fight to narrow the area which is subject to flood has been a successful one. Yet it stands to reason that if the same amount of water is made to follow a narrower course it will run in a stream proportionately deeper. A small part of this added depth will be accounted for by the scouring effect which the more rapid current will have upon the main channel; but most of it will be represented in the form of increased depth of water with corresponding likelihood that the levees will be broken or submerged. This would be true, even were the volume of water the same as in former years. But there is, unfortunately, the best of reason to believe that the volume of water in flood times has been enormously augmented as a result of the short-sighted policy pursued in the northern states.

Such a flood as we are now experiencing takes place when we have heavy rain, or rapid melting of snow, or both, throughout a large part of the 1,200,000 square miles of the Mississippi Valley. That has been the case this year, and in every preceding year of high water. However, before the Valley had been settled, there were several factors, operating to hold back the flood waters, which are no longer so effective as they once were. Along the western slopes of the Appalachians, where the Ohio and its tributaries rise, there were extensive forests. In several ways these served to retard the creation of torrents of water. The air above a forest is cooler, producing frequent slight precipitation instead of an occasional deluge. The fall of the water is slackened by its striking the leaves and by the necessity for its working through the spongy mass of dead vegetable matter which covers and interpenetrates the top layer of the soil. The roots hold the earth together and prevent its washing down into gullies which form a convenient channel for the flood current.

Further to the west, where most of the countryside consisted of open plains, the margins of rivers were heavily wooded, and this timber served the same purpose as the forests. The plains, before they had been broken by the plow, were covered with a rich, heavily matted vegetation. Even the most torrential rains were unable to get through to the roots, loosen the soil and wash it away. There were, moreover, numerous swamps and marshy places which acted as natural reservoirs in periods of excessive precipitation, holding the waters until they drained off slowly in the course of weeks, or evaporated. Finally, there were many lakes, which also caught and impounded much of the surplus water.

Most of the lakes are still in existence, of course; but all the other conditions have been radically altered. The greater part of the forest has been cut away, not on the European system which removes only a small part of the standing timber each year, allowing natural growth to replace it, but by stripping off practically every stick, leaving only the bare hillsides. This process has been accelerated by our failure to prevent disastrous forest fires. Much of the timber along the banks of streams has also been cut. The virgin sod has, of course, been plowed. In our eager search for farm land, we have drained the swamps and even some of the lakes. We put in ditches and sewers, in order that the water may run off as fast as it falls. Our municipalities are particularly proud of their fine storm drains.

What is the result? According to such authorities as Professor J. Russell Smith of Columbia University, author of "North America," E. A. Sherman of the U. S. Forest Service, and H. H. Bennett of the U. S. Bureau of Soils, our careless refusal to take any thought for the future has not only greatly augmented the seriousness of the present flood, and made it certain that similar disasters may be expected at frequent intervals in the future, but is resulting in wearing away the precious and practically irreplaceable top soil from much of our best lands. As Mr. Bennett observes:

> Failure to hold the absorptive surface soil of fields and pastures against the denudation of erosion has contributed to a much more rapid removal of the water

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that falls upon these eroded lands. The mellow top soil that is gone was far more retentive of moisture than the comparatively impervious sub-soil that sheet erosion has left behind. . . . If this kind of soil wastage is not stopped, there is little likelihood that floods will be controlled. Practically nothing is being done about this phase of flood prevention. There are no hillside terraces north of the Arkansas River. Eighteen inches of top soil has been removed from the youthful fields in some parts of northeastern Kansas. The entire top soil is gone from hundreds of thousands of acres in western Virginia, western Pennsylvania, eastern Kentucky and southeastern Ohio. From these lands rain water courses much faster to the Mississippi than formerly.

Terraces and grass woodlots, forests, and other soil-binding and soil-building crops will vastly improve the flood situation; not only will they slow up the run-off of water, but they will save the most valuable part of the soil and will reduce the clogging of streams which cuts down their carrying capacity, and adds to the flood danger.

The Department of Agriculture has issued a brief list of measures which it urges as a means of flood prevention:

The general reduction of soil erosion to prevent rapid run-off and the clogging of streams. [Several rivers, formerly navigable, have been filled with silt in a few years' time and can no longer be used.]

Largely increased efforts by the states and federal government and private owners for coöperative forest fire control.

Largely increased programs for public forests on tributary head waters, both by the federal and state governments.

A much larger program of tree planting on denuded forest lands.

Encouragement of farmers and other land-owners, through state and federal aid, to plant trees on rough lands and along water courses.

A study of the possibilities of restoring some of the bottom lands to their original condition as carriers of flood waters and producers of forests and game.

The only other important proposal looking to the future is one which comes from former Governor Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania, who was for many years chief of the Forestry Service of the United States. Mr. Pinchot believes that the flood waters could and should be impounded to some extent behind dams on the upper reaches of the tributary streams, and released in small amounts over a period of months. He points out that, by this system, not only could the flood conditions be much ameliorated, but enormous quantities of hydro-electric power could be produced—sufficient, in fact, to pay for the whole cost of the enterprise.

If our analysis of the situation is correct, how does it happen that so little has been heard of anything except levees and more levees, in the past? One reason is, of course, that the worst sufferers from the floods have not been those in areas where deforestation has taken place, but those along the lower reaches of the river, visited by the accumulated flood waters from the Mississippi and its great tributaries. A levee is a simple and visible object, behind which people may rest secure in a confidence which is justified—most of the time. No one's vested interest is upset by the building of a dike; while on the other hand, every alternative method of flood control means the impairment of somebody's economic interest. Spillways render useless vast tracts of arable land. So do reservoirs and the use of low-lying regions for catch basins. Timber men get enormously enhanced profits by destroying forests instead of trimming them out: in fact, they are probably correct when they plead that no one who pursues a careful system of arboriculture can compete in the open market with those who are taking off all the timber in one operation. Owners of drained swamps would fight to the death any proposal for restoring them to their first condition. The farmer insists on his right to plant the most profitable crops, even though he may be subjecting his lands to an erosion which will make them useless in another hundred years. That is something for posterity to worry about; and "what has posterity ever done for us?"

It is necessary to keep a perspective in considering this subject. Even with all the harm that has been done, we still go through five years out of every six without a flood; and if all the points in the program of the Department of Agriculture were carried out, we should still in all probability suffer an occasional visitation. Yet it should be clear that the problem by which we are confronted is enormously greater than is believed by those simple souls who shout for bigger and stronger levees, and are at present the only voices which make themselves heard in the halls of Congress. On October 1, 1927, the Mississippi River Commission is to make a special report on flood prevention. The Special Spillways Board is also to report, at the same date. It may be possible, while the memory of the present disaster is still fresh, to build up a body of public opinion in favor of remedies which are not, like the levees, in the long run a mere aggravation of the malady.

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HERBERT CROLY, PRESIDENT, DANIEL MEBANE, TREASURER

*EDITORS*

HERBERT CROLY BRUCE BLIVEN ROBERT LITTELL
GEORGE SOULE EDMUND WILSON STARK YOUNG
ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

*CONTRIBUTING EDITORS*

JANE ADDAMS JOHN DEWEY WALDO FRANK
ALVIN JOHNSON E. C. LINDEMAN GILBERT SELDES
ELINOR WYLIE LEO WOLMAN LEWIS MUMFORD

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# The Economic Conference

THE economic conference which is now in progress at Geneva is the result of a suggestion by Louis Loucheur. In 1925, he proposed to the League of Nations the holding of an international economic conference. After an interval of nearly two years, during which preparations have been going on, the conference began last week. The agenda was drawn up by a distinguished preparatory committee and a large collection of material has been assembled. Members of the conference have been appointed by their governments, invitations having been extended to all members of the League as well as to the United States of America, the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, Turkey, Mexico, Ecuador and Egypt. The U. S. S. R. accepted at the last minute, having settled its quarrel with Switzerland over the murder of Vorovsky. The United States is also represented.

Interest among Americans, before the meeting opened, was much less than in Europe. Our press has given it but little attention and the general public is all but ignorant of the plans. With a national income of perhaps $90,000,000,000 per annum, we are little impressed with the need for such a gathering. America is participating, but will do little more. Also, as a matter of fact, the report of M. Theunis of Belgium, the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, makes it clear that European troubles are the chief occasion for the conference. Specific reference is made to "the relative impoverishment of Europe." Although some of the questions on the agenda are "clearly of world importance," yet many of them "are to a peculiar extent difficulties, in the first instance, of Europe."

Economic analysis since 1918 has passed through a number of stages. Students of the subject having been impressed by the destruction during the War, the first reaction was a demand for increased production. Feverish activity, with an enlarged but indiscriminate output, collapsed in 1920. For a time thereafter, it was popular to insist that all would be well at the end of the depression. Business moves in cycles, it was said. A peak had been reached, the crisis had come and gone. With the passage of a few months, or at the end of a year or two, a recovery would take place.

Then it was concluded that, after all, the main difficulty had been unbalanced budgets and disorganized currencies. The financial conference at Brussels in 1920, and the general economic conference at Geneva in 1922, placed their emphasis, officially at least, on financial questions. During the intervening five years, national finances have improved. Gratifying progress has been made in balancing budgets and, one after another, currencies have been stabilized. There is still nervousness in several quarters, but it is due, for the most part, not to a weakness in the financial technique of the steps that have been taken, but to a fear that the financial balance may be upset by non-financial weaknesses. Budgets and monetary systems are important, but it is recognized that they are only financial machinery to facilitate economic transactions. If imperfect in their organization and operation, they may wreck the economic life of any country; but they are no substitute for more fundamental considerations.

Austria's finances were rescued in 1922 and carefully supervised until 1926, but her trade is still inadequate and unemployment is serious. Germany's mark is stabilized and the Dawes Plan operates. Yet her trade balance is still adverse, and the unemployed are nearly as numerous as a year ago. The British have had only minor financial troubles. They are now officially optimistic, but their budget involves a heavy deficit. They are merely hoping for a revival of trade, while they know for a certainty that their coal difficulties are not really settled, that their railroads have paid nominal dividends only by drawing on surplus, and that their cotton industry must be reorganized.

The Great War was fought primarily out of income, not with stores of accumulated capital. The actual destruction was limited to a rather small area, and was soon repaired. But the delicate economic organization does not yet function effectively. The population of Europe, outside of Russia, was in 1925 4 percent greater than in 1913, but the volume of trade was only 94 percent of that in 1913, and in 1924 it had been only 89 percent. European countries, formerly lenders to the world, are now heavy borrowers. Even England, in 1926, went behind some £12,000,000 in her balance of payments. Unfavorable trade balances are seriously large, and even "stabilized" currencies are none too steady.

It will be noticed that population is still increasing. The growth of the past century has been met by emigration and by industrialization. Today the newer parts of the world are accepting immigrants less freely. Also, other parts of the world are industrializing. Cotton mills in Italy and Germany compete with those of Lancashire, while still others in China, Japan, India and elsewhere cause trouble for all European manufacturers. So long as machine methods were used chiefly in England and in a few other countries of Western Europe, the Old World was in a favorable position. Larger and larger numbers could be supported in limited areas by abandoning agriculture and specializing in manufacturing and in foreign trade. Today England is an illustration of the result. Over forty-five million people are crowded into a small area.

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Only about 20 percent of the population is rural, and the population density is nearly 500 per square mile. One-half to two-thirds of the food supply of the country must be imported.

Whether there are too many people in Europe or in the world need not be argued in the present emergency. The law of diminishing returns and the Malthusian theory of population are not to be ignored, but in this article they may be passed by. There may come a time when total population will press severely on the food supply. Today the problem is a little different. Certain areas of the world are very densely populated and depend on other areas for food, for raw materials and for markets. Unless orders for manufactured goods are received from a world that can pay, the manufacturers of Western Europe will not order raw materials. If raw materials are not ordered and manufactured and the products then sold, these industrialized countries will suffer from short-time operations and unemployment, and they will find it harder and harder to import food. Living standards are none too high, but a prolongation of present tendencies will drive these standards lower. Population is growing, but trade is retarded. If the various nations of this complex world cannot find ways of carrying on business freely, the tension must increase.

In the fact of this drift, two retarding influences have been prominent. One is the organization of numerous small states, each anxious to develop its own national life. It is somewhat the fashion now to decry this movement, and, especially in America, to deride this folly of new tariff barriers and intense nationalism. Yet, only a few years ago, we were eagerly espousing the cause of oppressed minorities, and advocating the rights of small groups to self-government. Poland, Czechoslovakia and others made a strong appeal; Finland, Esthonia and the rest were applauded for their revolt from a Bolshevist Russia. Even now, a majority vote would doubtless be cast against the return of these new countries to their old allegiance, or against any attempt to force their consolidation into larger units.

But if these states be accepted as a fact, they cannot be denied the right to a control over their own economic lives and to the privilege of developing and protecting such economic activities as they wish. They cannot be forced to raise all of their revenue by direct taxation and told that import duties, even though protective, must not be imposed. Nor can the older states be blamed, in a period of depreciating currencies, if they feared exchange dumping, and raised their tariffs accordingly. Even if these same currencies are now stabilized, recovery will not be rapid, and the indiscriminate importation of foreign goods would be a hindrance, not a help. And it will not do to contend that the worst troubles are now over and that prosperity is actually in sight. Only a glance at the latest statistics of unemployment is necessary; in most of the countries of Central and Western Europe the situation is only less serious than in 1921.

Then there are the debts—internal and external. An entirely new set of debtor-creditor relationships has come into existence in the war and post-war years. An economic structure had developed over decades. Some countries were definitely established as creditors and others as debtors; some regularly had import balances of trade and others had export balances. Movements of raw materials, foodstuffs and manufactured goods were adjusted to these facts. Thousands of factories had been built and millions of workmen with their families had been concentrated in cities to meet the demand. Everywhere an intricate industrial structure had appeared to fit the need. Although changes were coming more and more rapidly in the twentieth century, readjustments could be made with only a moderate strain.

Then, within ten years, conditions were everywhere altered. Within each country, the various social classes were forced into new relations to each other. Some nearly disappeared, some were debased and others were exalted. In Eastern and Central Europe, the great mass of internal debts was repudiated, leaving only the external as a serious problem. In Western Europe, both classes remain to hamper recovery.

Trade (both in visible and in invisible items) that once flowed in certain definite directions, has been suddenly required to reverse itself. Germany, formerly with an excess of imports, is now expected to have an excess of exports. The same is true of Italy. England must at least lessen her import balance. If invisible items are included, even her total balance may have to be definitely changed. Imagine a stream, or, better, a complex system, of world drainage. Fancy some powerful force suddenly compelling each river and brook to change its course without adequate time for the dredging and digging, and the other work such alterations would call for.

It is this situation that the Geneva Conference is facing. "The Conference is not composed of responsible delegates invested with full powers for the conclusion of conventions; it is intended rather to organize *a general consultation* in the course of which, as at the Financial Conference at Brussels, the various programs and doctrines may be freely exposed without the freedom of discussion being restricted by any immediate necessity to transform the conclusions of the Conference into international engagements."

So reads the report of M. Theunis in behalf of the Preparatory Committee. The agenda, as worded, covers a wide area and a number of topics impossibly large for thorough discussion. Attention will probably be concentrated chiefly on obstacles to freedom of trade and on international industrial agreements. What is done will probably attract

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little public attention in the United States. An arms conference, dealing largely with symptoms rather than with causes, is spectacular. An economic conference, whose members have no power to settle anything and whose results, if any, will be hard to trace and will manifest themselves only through years to come, will doubtless not be taken seriously on this side of the ocean.

Resolutions will be passed as at Brussels in 1920. The delegates will go home and will report to their respective governments. Nothing revolutionary will happen. But it is a good thing to have views exchanged, to talk over with others certain mutual problems and even to pass resolutions. Only by such measures can international education proceed.

ERNEST MINOR PATTERSON.

# Mexico's Bid for Supremacy in Central America

I HAVE just returned from a protracted visit to Nicaragua and other Central American republics. As a result of my investigations, I am firmly convinced that Mexico is challenging Uncle Sam for the position of commanding influence in these countries. Already she has so far undermined American prestige that we shall experience great difficulty in rebuilding it, if we are ever able to do so at all.

Contrary to the belief of many persons, this has not been caused by the Soviet government of Russia, seeking to establish its secret control over Central America. Nor is it being fostered by the oil interests, or the Catholic Church. There are few traces of oil in Central America, and the Church plays but a small and unimportant part in government activities. It is the Mexican government itself which is seeking priority at the expense of American prestige.

Of late years, Mexico has adopted American tactics in regard to her neighboring republics, without allowing their inhabitants to become aware of the fact. Because Mexico is characteristically Latin, to her sister republics her methods are more or less above suspicion. She has, therefore, been able to create a state of mind in these Central American states inimical to American prestige. This is not a figment of the imagination. It is concretely proved by what is happening in every Central American country. Let us examine each one briefly:

Guatemala is completely under the influence of Mexico. It was Guatemala which harbored Dr. Juan B. Sacasa, leader of the Liberal insurrection in Nicaragua. After learning of Mexico's support of the Sacasa revolt, the United States exerted every effort to prevent the Liberal leader from leaving Guatemala and returning to Nicaragua to carry out his plans to oust President Diaz. Pressure was brought to bear from Washington upon the Guatemalan government and, after much difficulty, assurances were given that Sacasa would not be allowed to leave the country with Nicaragua as his destination. But Sacasa "escaped" (with the connivance of the Guatemalan government, it is generally believed), landed on Nicaraguan soil, and for the past five months has been waging an unsuccessful effort to gain the presidency.

Time and again, Mexican arms and ammunition consigned to the Liberal forces have been re-shipped from a Guatemalan port — Puerto Barrios. On several occasions they have been trans-shipped across the country, to outwit American naval vessels patrolling Nicaraguan waters to prevent filibustering in violation of the American embargo.

The seat of Nicaraguan Liberal activities is in Guatemala City. Because of the American State Department pressure, Guatemala has not recognized the Sacasa government. It has, however, steadfastly refused to recognize President Diaz. Early in February of this year, it went so far as to instruct the Guatemalan Minister at Managua to demand his passports and withdraw, which was done. In diplomatic circles, this is always an act of serious, and hostile, importance.

Only recently, Mexico elevated its diplomatic representative at Guatemala City to the high and dignified position of an Ambassador, in order that he might take precedence over the American Minister. Guatemala reciprocated.

Salvador is the smallest, but most progressive, of all the Central American republics. The Salvadorian is not an admirer of the Mexican. He has his own problems, which he solves to his complete satisfaction. Still, he isn't averse to receiving gratuitous assistance, if apparently it is not going to cost him anything. If ever a bill is presented —well, two can play the good old game of double-cross.

Mexico has displayed her willingness to aid Salvador, along certain lines, and the latter has accepted, anticipating further favors in the not distant future. And this, I venture to say, is likely to result in some geographical readjustments in Central America, unless the United States steps in to prevent it, which it probably won't.

Jefferson Caffery, the American Minister to Salvador, is having his troubles now, keeping the

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country in line. While Salvador recognized the Diaz government, it did so only because Caffery made such strong diplomatic representations. No inconsiderable amount of Mexican influence was exerted; but Caffery won. Now he is finding it difficult to hold his prize. Why? The reason is simple:

In the first place, Salvador is obligated to Mexico for many favors, one of which is a high-power radio station. Mexico has been very generous in distributing these, gratis, to various Central American republics. Salvador has one; Costa Rica also, about which more anon; other countries have been offered one. But it isn't only the radio station: since time out of mind, Salvador, which lies on the Pacific, along the southwestern border of Honduras, has wanted an outlet on the Caribbean. Being industrious and progressive, with an increasing population, she has foreseen that economic necessity will demand expansion and an outlet closer to her trade marts. Time and again she has sought to purchase from the Honduran government a strip of territory along the frontier between Guatemala and Honduras, which would give her Puerto Cortez, an important port on the Caribbean. Honduras has steadfastly refused to sell, even resenting the suggestion. Now it is rumored—although there is nothing upon which one can hang a definite accusation—that Mexico has promised Salvador this valuable corridor. How? By indirectly assisting in the overthrow of the present Honduran government. Then, when the Mexican-supported candidate is installed in office, the territory will be sold. Political skullduggery? True. But both nations probably think the results will justify the effort, if they can get away with it, which is quite likely. And intervention on our part would undoubtedly result in a flood of criticism charging imperialism.

Honduras has been the hotbed of revolution for years. It even excels Nicaragua in this respect. The country presents a fertile field for the seed of revolt. No political agitator able to orate about liberty, equality, and the overthrow of tyrants, fails to find a following. American influence has not been exerted as completely as in some other countries, although Honduras is basically friendly to the United States. True, the present government is in power because we applied our policy of non-recognition to a previous one which resigned after it had come into power by force. This was one of the few times when the principle of non-recognition actually worked. The present government isn't the best Honduras has ever had; nor is it the worst. Even now it is tottering, and strong forces are on the verge of pushing it over. These activities may be traced directly to Mexico, both seeking to gain control of the country, and to cement her alliance with Salvador. (Of all the Central American republics, Honduras was the only one to recognize the Diaz government voluntarily.)

Much has been said about Mexican activities in Nicaragua. It is generally known there, since President Coolidge sent his message on the subject to Congress early in January, that the Sacasa revolt has been supported by the Calles government. There have been denials on both sides, of course, but these are only of recent date. While in Nicaragua, I learned from unimpeachable sources that the Liberals openly boasted of their alliance, until they learned that the United States viewed it with disfavor.

I have in my possession quantities of ammunition bearing the engraved letters "FNC," meaning *Fabrica Nacional Cartuches,* or National Cartridge Factory (of Mexico). These cartridges and the rifles and machine guns which accompanied them could have come from no other source than the Mexican National Arsenal. It is now admitted that they did come from Mexico, but it is claimed they were purchased by the Sacasa government in the same manner as the Diaz government purchased similar munitions of war from the United States government. It is generally believed and, in some quarters, admitted, that they were given, in return for assurances of unknown purport. Sacasa's meager financial support could not possibly have enabled him to purchase the quantities of arms and ammunition which have been smuggled in to him.

Mexico was the first nation to recognize the Sacasa government, and has steadfastly maintained her position in the face of all protests. That is her privilege; but the State Department views her action in supplying the Sacasa movement with munitions of war as an unfriendly act. We are trying to quiet the disturbance, and Mexico is apparently desirous of fomenting it. Had Mexico not interfered in Nicaraguan affairs, Sacasa would undoubtedly have continued to receive the support of the United States in his efforts to oust the dictator Chamorro, and today probably would be living in the *Presidencia* at Managua.

And now we come to Costa Rica. Here again is seen Mexico's influence. Costa Rica has an efficient, high-power radio station, a "gift of friendship" from the Mexican government. Nightly this station receives and disseminates through the press thousands of words of material, much of which is anti-American propaganda, originating in and broadcast from Mexico City. An American in Costa Rica is about as popular as the Pope would be at a Ku Klux Klan Konklave. This is equally true of almost every country south of the Rio Grande.

Like Guatemala, Costa Rica has refused to recognize the Diaz government. It, too, is one of the centers of the Nicaraguan Liberal movement. In San Jose, the capital, is a strong *junta* of exiled Liberals and those Conservative adherents of former President Martinez, also living there, who are opposed to Diaz. It is obvious that the Costa Rican government is *muy simpatico* to the Sacasa revolt, otherwise it would take steps to prevent the landing of Mexican arms and ammunition on Costa

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Rican soil, for trans-shipment to the Liberal forces across the frontier. Not that it has taken official cognizance of the fact; but nothing has been done to stop the practice, although it is generally known.

There has been no inconsiderable amount of Mexican agitation in Panama. Some people attribute the present state of unrest there to an expression of nationalism. Others say it is retribution and our chickens are coming home to roost. But that doesn't alter the obvious fact that Panama has been and is being ungrateful to the parent that gave it birth and has supported it since. Witness the slap in the face we received three months ago when the recently negotiated treaty between this country and Panama was repudiated by the latter.

Agitators—Mexicans and others—have worked unremittingly in Panama to undermine the position of the United States there. A year ago they managed to precipitate a general strike which threatened serious consequences. In fact, for twenty-four hours, the radical element could have overthrown, and assumed control of, the government—but it didn't grasp the fact until afterwards, and then it was too late. American soldiers occupied Panama City and settled the affair in their own efficient way. Several persons were killed; a number deported. Peace and order were restored, but the matter hasn't ended. Other agitators have taken the places of their less fortunate brethren and are using a little more finesse in creating unrest.

LINTON WELLS.

# Italy, 1927

THE road of the pass was hard and smooth and not yet dusty in the early morning. Below were the hills with oak and chestnut trees, and far away below was the sea. On the other side were snowy mountains.

We came down from the pass through wooded country. There were bags of charcoal piled beside the road, and through the trees we saw charcoal burners' huts. It was Sunday and the road, rising and falling, but always dropping away from the altitude of the pass, went through the scrub woods and through villages.

Outside the villages there were fields with vines. The fields were brown and the vines coarse and thick. The houses were white, and in the streets the men, in their Sunday clothes, were playing bowls. Against the walls of some of the houses there were pear trees, their branches candelabra'd against the white walls. The pear trees had been sprayed, and the walls of the houses were stained a metallic blue-green by the spray vapor. There were small clearings around the villages where the vines grew and then the woods.

In a village twenty kilometers above Spezia there was a crowd in the square, and a young man carrying a suitcase came up to the car and asked us to take him in to Spezia.

"There are only two places, and they are occupied," I said. We had an old Ford coupé.

"I will ride on the outside."

"You will be uncomfortable."

"That makes nothing. I must go to Spezia."

"Should we take him?" I asked Guy.

"He seems to be going anyway," Guy said. The young man handed in a parcel through the window.

"Look after this," he said. Two men tied his suitcase on the back of the car above our suitcases. He shook hands with everyone, explained that to a Fascist and a man as used to traveling as himself there was no discomfort, and climbed up on the running board on the left-hand side of the car, holding on inside, his right arm through the open window.

"You can start," he said. The crowd waved. He waved with his free hand.

"What did he say?" Guy asked me.

"That we could start."

"Isn't he nice," Guy said.

The road followed a river. Across the river were mountains. The sun was taking the frost out of the grass. It was bright and cold and the air came cold through the open wind-shield.

"How do you think he likes it out there?" Guy was looking up the road. His view out of his side of the car was blocked by our guest. The young man projected from the side of the car like the figurehead of a ship. He had turned his coat collar up and pulled his hat down and his nose looked cold in the wind.

"Maybe he'll get enough of it," Guy said. "That's the side our bum tire's on."

"Oh, he'd leave us if we blew out," I said. "He wouldn't get his traveling clothes dirty."

"Well, I don't mind him," Guy said. "Except the way he leans out on the turns."

The woods were gone; the road had left the river to climb; the radiator was boiling; the young man looked annoyedly and suspiciously at the steam and rusty water; the engine was grinding, with both Guy's feet on the first speed pedal, up and up, back and forth and up, and finally out level. The grinding stopped, and in the new quiet there was a great churning bubbling in the radiator. We were at the top of the last range above Spezia and the sea. The road descended with short, barely rounded turns. Our guest hung out on the turns and nearly pulled the top-heavy car over.

"You can't tell him not to," I said to Guy. "It's his sense of self-preservation."

"The great Italian sense."

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"The greatest Italian sense."

We came down around curves, through deep dust, the dust powdering the olive trees. Spezia spread below along the sea. The road flattened outside the town. Our guest put his head in the window.

"I want to stop."

"Stop it," I said to Guy.

We slowed up at the side of the road. The young man got down, went to the back of the car and untied the suitcase.

"I stop here so you won't get into trouble carrying passengers," he said. "My package."

I handed him the package. He reached in his pocket.

"How much do I owe you?"

"Nothing."

"Why not?"

"I don't know," I said.

"Then thanks," the young man said, not "thank you," or "thank you very much," or "thank you a thousand times," all of which you formerly said in Italy to a man when he handed you a time table or explained about a direction. The young man uttered the lowest form of the word thanks and looked after us suspiciously as Guy started the car. I waved my hand at him. He was too dignified to reply. We went on into Spezia.

"That's a young man that will go a long way in Italy," I said to Guy.

"Well," said Guy, "he went twenty kilometers with us."

### A Meal in Spezia

We came into Spezia looking for a place to eat. The street was wide and the houses high and yellow. We followed the tram track into the center of town. On the walls of the houses were stenciled eye-bugging portraits of Mussolini, with hand-painted "vivas," the double V in black paint with drippings of paint down the wall. Side streets went down to the harbor. It was bright and the people were all out for Sunday. The stone paving had been sprinkled and there were damp stretches in the dust. We went close to the curb to avoid a tram.

"Let's eat somewhere simple," Guy said.

We stopped opposite two restaurant signs. We were standing across the street and I was buying the papers. The two restaurants were side by side. A woman standing in the doorway of one smiled at us and we crossed the street and went in.

It was dark inside and at the back of the room three girls were sitting at a table with an old woman. Across from us at another table sat a sailor. He sat there neither eating nor drinking. Further back a young man in a blue suit was writing at a table. His hair was pomaded and shining and he was very smartly dressed and clean-cut looking.

The light came in through the doorway, and through the window where vegetables, fruit, steaks and chops were arranged in a show case. A girl came and took our order and another girl stood in the doorway. We noticed that she wore nothing under her house dress. The girl who took our order put her arm around Guy's neck while we were looking at the menu. There were three girls in all, and they all took turns going and standing in the doorway. The old woman at the table in the back of the room spoke to them and they sat down again with her.

There was no doorway leading from the room except into the kitchen. A curtain hung over it. The girl who had taken our order came in from the kitchen with spaghetti. She put it on the table and brought a bottle of red wine and sat down at the table.

"Well," I said to Guy, "you wanted to eat some place simple."

"This isn't simple. This is complicated."

"What do you say?" asked the girl. "Are you Germans?"

"South Germans," I said. "The South Germans are a gentle, lovable people."

"Don't understand," she said.

"What's the mechanics of this place?" Guy asked. "Do I have to let her put her arm around my neck?"

"Certainly," I said. "Mussolini has abolished the brothels. This is a restaurant."

The girl wore a one-piece dress. She leaned forward against the table and put her hands on her breasts and smiled. She smiled better on one side than on the other and turned the good side toward us. The charm of the good side had been enhanced by some event which had smoothed the other side of her nose in as warm wax can be smoothed. Her nose, however, did not look like warm wax. It was very cold and firmed, only smoothed in. "You like me?" she asked Guy.

"He adores you," I said. "But he doesn't speak Italian."

"Ich sprech Deutsch," she said, and stroked Guy's hair.

"Speak to the lady in your native tongue, Guy."

"Where do you come from?" asked the lady.

"Potsdam."

"And you will stay here now for a little while?"

"In this so dear Spezia?" I asked.

"Tell her we have to go," said Guy. "Tell her we are very ill, and have no money."

"My friend is a misogynist," I said. "An old German misogynist."

"Tell him I love him."

I told him.

"Will you shut your mouth and get us out of here?" Guy said. The lady had placed another arm around his neck. "Tell him he is mine," she said. I told him.

"Will you get us out of here?"

"You are quarreling," the lady said. "You do not love one another."

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"We are Germans," I said proudly. "Old South Germans."

"Tell him he is a beautiful boy," the lady said. Guy is thirty-eight and takes some pride in the fact that he is taken for a traveling salesman in France. "You are a beautiful boy," I said.

"Who says so?" Guy asked, "you or her?"

"She does. I'm just your interpreter. Isn't that what you got me in on this trip for?"

"I'm glad it's her," said Guy. "I didn't want to have to leave you here too."

"I don't know. Spezia's a lovely place."

"Spezia," the lady said. "You are talking about Spezia."

"Lovely place," I said.

"It is my country," she said. "Spezia is my home and Italy is my country."

"She says that Italy is her country."

"Tell her it looks like her country," Guy said.

"What have you for dessert?" I asked.

"Fruit," she said. "We have bananas."

"Bananas are all right," Guy said. "They've got skins on."

"Oh, he takes bananas," the lady said. She embraced Guy.

"What does she say?" he asked, keeping his face out of the way.

"She is pleased because you take bananas."

"Tell her I don't take bananas."

"The Signor does not take bananas."

"Ah," said the lady, crestfallen, "he doesn't take bananas."

"Tell her I take a cold bath every morning," Guy said.

"The Signor takes a cold bath every morning."

"No understand," the lady said.

Across from us the property sailor had not moved. No one in the place paid any attention to him.

"We want the bill," I said.

"Oh, no. You must stay."

"Listen," the clean-cut young man said from the table where he was writing, "let them go. These two are worth nothing."

The lady took my hand. "You won't stay? You won't ask him to stay?"

"We have to go," I said. "We have to get to Pisa, or if possible, Firenze, tonight. We can amuse ourselves in those cities at the end of the day. It is now the day. In the day we must cover distance."

"To stay a little while is nice."

"To travel is necessary during the light of day."

"Listen," the clean-cut young man said. "Don't bother to talk with these two. I tell you they are worth nothing and I know."

"Bring us the bill," I said. She brought the bill from the old woman and went back and sat at the table. Another girl came in from the kitchen. She walked the length of the room and stood in the doorway.

"Don't bother with these two," the clean-cut young man said in a wearied voice. "Come and eat. They are worth nothing."

We paid the bill and stood up. All the girls, the old woman, and the clean-cut young man sat down at table together. The property sailor sat with his head in his hands. No one had spoken to him all the time we were at lunch. The girl brought us our change that the old woman counted out for her and went back to her place at the table. We left a tip on the table and went out. When we were seated in the car ready to start, the girl came out and stood in the door. We started and I waved to her. She did not wave, but stood there looking after us.

## After the Rain

It was raining hard when we passed through the suburbs of Genoa and even going very slowly behind the tram-cars and the motor trucks liquid mud splashed on to the sidewalks so that people stepped into doorways as they saw us coming. In San Pier d'Arena, the industrial suburb outside of Genoa, there is a wide street with two car tracks and we drove down the center to avoid sending the mud on to the men going home from work. On our left was the Mediterranean. There was a big sea running and waves broke and the wind blew the spray against the car. A river bed, that, when we had passed going into Italy, had been wide, stony and dry, was running brown, and up to the banks. The brown water discolored the sea and as the waves thinned and cleared in breaking, the light came through the yellow water and the crests, detached by the wind, blew across the road.

A big car passed us going fast, and a sheet of muddy water rose up and over our wind-shield and radiator. The automatic wind-shield cleaner moved back and forth, spreading the film over the glass. We stopped and ate lunch at Sestri. There was no heat in the restaurant and we kept our hats and coats on. We could see the car outside through the window. It was covered with mud and was stopped beside some boats that had been pulled up beyond the waves. In the restaurant you could see your breath.

The *pasta asciuta* was good; the wine tasted of alum, and we poured water in it. Afterward the waiter brought beefsteak and fried potatoes. A man and a woman sat at the far end of the restaurant. He was middle-aged and she was young and wore black. All during the meal she would blow out her breath in the cold damp air. The man would look at it and shake his head. They ate without talking and the man held her hand under the table. She was good-looking and they seemed very sad. They had a traveling bag with them.

We had the papers and I read the account of the Shanghai fighting aloud to Guy. After the

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meal he left with the waiter to search for a place which did not exist in the restaurant, and I cleaned off the wind-shield, the lights and the license plates with a rag. Guy came back and we backed the car out and started. The waiter had taken him across the road and into an old house. The people in the house were suspicious and the waiter had remained with Guy to see nothing was stolen.

"Although I don't know how, me not being a plumber, they expected me to steal anything," Guy said.

As we came up on a headland beyond the town the wind struck the car and nearly tipped it over.

"It's good it blows us away from the sea," Guy said.

"Well," I said, "they drowned Shelley somewhere along here."

"That was down by Viareggio," Guy said. "Do you remember what we came to this country for?"

"Yes," I said. "But we didn't get it."

"We'll be out of it tonight."

"If we can get past Ventimiglia."

"We'll see. I don't like to drive this coast at night." It was early afternoon and the sun was out. Below the sea was blue with whitecaps running toward Savona. Back, beyond the cape, the brown and blue waters joined. Out ahead of us a tramp steamer was going up the coast.

"Can you still see Genoa?" Guy asked.

"Oh, yes."

"That next big cape ought to put it out of sight."

"We'll see it a long time yet. I can still see Portofino Cape way behind it."

Finally we could not see Genoa. I looked back as we came out and there was only the sea, and below in the bay, a line of beach with fishing boats and above, on the side of the hill, a town and then capes far down the coast.

"It's gone now," I said to Guy.

"Oh, it's been gone a long time now."

"But we couldn't be sure till we got way out."

There was a sign with a picture of an S-turn and *Svolta Pericolosa*. The road curved around the headland and the wind blew through the crack in the wind-shield. Below the cape was a flat stretch beside the sea. The wind had dried the mud and the wheels were beginning to lift dust. On the flat road we passed a Fascist riding a bicycle, a heavy revolver in a holster on his back. He held the middle of the road on his bicycle and we turned out for him. He looked up at us as we passed. Ahead there was a railway crossing, and as we came toward it the gates went down.

As we waited, the Fascist came up on his bicycle. The train went by and Guy started the engine.

"Wait," the bicycle man shouted from behind the car. "Your number's dirty."

I got out with a rag. The number had been cleaned at lunch.

"You can read it," I said.

"You think so?"

"Read it."

"I cannot read it. It is dirty."

I wiped it off with the rag.

"How's that?"

"Twenty-five lire."

"What?" I said. "You could have read it. It's only dirty from the state of the roads."

"You don't like Italian roads?"

"They are dirty."

"Fifty lire." He spat in the road. "Your car is dirty and you are dirty, too."

"Good. And give me a receipt with your name."

He took out a receipt book, made in duplicate, and perforated, so one side could be given to the customer, and the other side filled in and kept as a stub. There was no carbon to record what the customer's ticket said.

"Give me fifty lire."

He wrote in indelible pencil, tore out the slip and handed it to me. I read it.

"This is for twenty-five lire."

"A mistake," he said, and changed the twenty-five to fifty.

"And now the other side. Make it fifty in the part you keep."

He smiled a beautiful Italian smile and wrote something on the receipt stub, holding it so I could not see.

"Go on," he said, "before your number gets dirty again."

We drove for two hours after it was dark and slept in Mentone that night. It seemed very cheerful and clean and sane and lovely. We had driven from Ventimiglia to Pisa and Florence, across the Romogna to Rimini, back through Forli, Imola, Bologna, Parma, Piacenza and Genoa to Ventimiglia again. The whole trip had only taken ten days. Naturally, in such a short trip, we had no opportunity to see how things were with the country or the people.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY.

# Washington Notes

ONE of the reasons the small group of progressives in Congress—and particularly in the Senate—did not show up better at the last session was because they had no leader. There was no one around whom to rally. The death of the elder La Follette left a hole that has not been filled, and there was a lack of fire and force about his former followers and associates in the Senate which was very noticeable throughout the session. Another reason so little was heard of the progressives was because of the pusillanimous nature of the Democrats. During the Sixty-eighth Congress, the Democrats and progressives, by combining, made themselves a singularly effective force, and performed signal service to the country by their solid support of the effort to disclose the crookedness and corruption under the Harding

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regime. No sensible person will dispute that had it not been for that combination Daugherty would not have been driven from the Cabinet, nor would the whole evil oil scandal have been revealed.

Yet, notwithstanding these undeniable facts, Democratic leadership at the last session permitted three or four reactionary newspapers, along with their three or four reactionary financial angels, to convince them that their defeat in 1924 was due to a considerable extent to their close affiliation with the progressives in Congress, and that the only way for the Democratic party to regain the confidence of the "business interests" was to cut loose from such a degrading alliance and return to "fundamental Democratic principles." Worse rot I never heard, and I recall saying so at the time. But the sap-headed Democratic leaders gulped it down just the same, and in the last session a deliberate policy of abstaining from even an appearance of making common cause with the progressives was followed.

The net result was that, among others, all opportunity to write a tax bill of their own was lost, and the Coolidge administration permitted to go through the session with practically no effective criticism, although it lay wide open most of the time. It would have been different, I think, had the elder La Follette lived. But, lacking a leader, the progressives could not function as a determined, compact group, and, lacking Democratic coöperation, which was natural and logical according to every law of politics and common sense, they remained for the most part supine and inert. There was about both Democratic and progressive policy an utter lack of clearness or force. Both elements, instead of being compact and militant, were vague and at loose ends.

As I have said, the main reason, so far as the progressives are concerned, was the loss of their leader. That makes interesting the gossip in Washington these days about former Governor Gifford Pinchot. Gallant Gifford, I am told, has taken a house up on Scott Circle, and next winter has it in mind to become the center of the progressive group—in other words, to take the place of La Follette. I doubt very much that he can do that, but I am glad he will be here. He may have his faults, but Gifford is a fighter—and we certainly need fighters around here, unless political life is to lose all its charm and color, and the whole fascinating game be smothered under the thick and solemn smugness of the Mellon-Coolidge atmosphere. Gifford, unfortunately, will not be in the Senate—I do wish he were—but the fervor with which he dislikes the sainted Secretary of the Treasury and the cordiality with which he condemns the noble Calvin, combined with his character, capacity and general disposition, seem to me to insure some fun, even with Gifford on the outside. He has enough enthusiasm to inspire the progressive group, and enough energy to map out a program for them. It may not be wholly sound, but it will be a program. He will be a help, will Gifford—and hating as I do the dull life, I am strong for him.

It will be interesting to have Gifford with us next winter during the Vare fight. It will also be interesting, to Mr. Coolidge and Mr. Mellon, to have him around. Also to Mr. Vare's staunch champion and defender, the Hon. David A. Reed of Pennsylvania. I am told that the idea that his defeat last year for Senator has put him out of Pennsylvania politics is not shared in the least by Gifford. On the contrary, he is not even discouraged. Unless I am very badly informed, Gifford has every intention of plunging into the Pennsylvania primaries again next year, when not only Mr. Reed but Mr. Reed's friend, Mr. Vare, will have to run. I am, it will be noticed, taking it for granted that Mr. Vare will not retain his seat in the Senate, and will have to run again if he wants to get it, which I think is a pretty fair assumption. If Gifford goes in, he may, and probably will, be beaten again, but that makes little difference to him. He will at least most certainly give the whole Mellon-Reed-Vare machine a lot of trouble, and its managers many unhappy moments. Good luck, Gifford!

T. R. B.

Washington.

# Sophocles and Sierra

*Sophocles' Electra, translated by Edward Hayes Plumptre. Metropolitan Opera House, May 3, 1927.*

*The Road to Happiness, by Martinez Sierra and Eduardo Marquina. Forrest Theater, May 2, 1927.*

TALKING about the production of a Greek drama like "Electra" in the Greek manner gets us nowhere. In the first place, we do not know how a Greek drama was done. We are not even sure how the verse sounded, and, if we were sure, we have not the voices to sound it in Greek or English. We know only a little of how the chorus was managed, have small idea of the dancing, and almost none of the total style. If we knew this, we should not have the training among our actors to do it. And if we knew exactly what was done and could do it, the meaning would be different, since the distance in time is a part of what is Greek to us, and since the Greek conceptions are altered and restated as we take them in. They are far from us in time, far from us racially: the simplest little Neapolitan, for instance, who has given up his sweetheart and married to obey his family's orders knows more about the meaning of Sophocles' theme of avenging a family murder than our most learned professor. At most, the problem we have is to restate the meaning and quality of Sophocles' play as best we can, recreating it in terms of our own theater, stating our idea, sticking to it and enlivening it, as a singer in a song.

Miss Margaret Anglin's production of "Electra" puts us so much in her debt that criticism is only ungrateful. The difficulties are so great that trying the play at all is an achievement. What you could say of these performances at the Metropolitan Opera House is that they did not kill the play, however much the harshness and immortal beauty of "Electra" may have eluded a production that was in English, inside a building, on a dry, monotone stage, with a young lady chorus, with unmasked faces, with bad make-ups, no beards, and without any real training in declamation, movement or formal beauty. It was a production not distinguished in any sense, but agreeable and sincere. Miss Anglin's reading was in the elevated style and fair enough; she possessed no little of the right tragic tone, and an emotional facility that was remarkable. There is no reason why

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she should dress the part so dully or so realistically. Miss Ruth Holt Boucicault was effective as Clytemnestra; she got much of the regal and lustful and ironic value of the role. Mr. Ralph Roeder, in his Orestes, read his verse with so beautiful an ear as is rarely heard on our stage; I could hear the entire pattern underneath his fine phrasing, and all the delicate variety and conflict of the stresses. Visually, Mr. Livingston Platt's production, with its palace front and two protecting deities, was unnecessarily mouse-colored and dun for me; but it had the honorable intention of dignity and remoteness of style, and it did not intrude with an insistent ingenuity or exoticism in primitive design. The costumes invite less charity, they were mostly styleless and silly.

The main point is that we must be thankful for the courage that gives us all this poetry and magnificence, this flight of magnificent words, this enveloping music of poetic idea. It is something to see the great progression of this play, to see this piety and exaltation of the passions, and to have the sense of the sublimity that Longinus speaks of as that Echo of Elevation of mind, "when the mind in the height of its rapture exults and feels a sort of command, as if itself produced what it had been only hearing."

Señor Martinez Sierra, having brought his company here to New York from the Esclava Theater in Madrid, may well be pleased with the way they have accounted for themselves. It is a good all-round company of actors, well directed, with an adequate if whimsical stage decor, and a general directness of method that is as modern as any and better than most.

Señorita Catalina Barcena, as the heroine of this first play, took the part of an orphan girl of the people. The old blind man who had been her friend dies and leaves her his blessing and advice, never to beg, never to go to the cities, to earn her bread by her own labor, to accept her sorrows as they come. "The Road to Happiness" shows a series of incidents in the girl's life; we see her with the farmer and his wife, from whom she departs to avoid his love; with the aviator, with whom she falls in love; with the gypsies, where she is the cause of jealousy and stabbing; at the inn, where she accepts the love of the deformed son of the mistress, where the aviator returns, offers her his love and name, where the curtain falls with her at the feet of an old blind man, strangely like her dead friend, who tells her that the road to happiness is through life and a strong, pure heart. She will not go with the aviator, whom she loves, but will keep the memory of that and stay on where she found a need for her.

The play itself is simple, made up of poetry, plain fact and loving irony. Its quality is a kind of realistic mysticism. But it is not so simple as most Anglo-Saxons might think. Like Sierra's "Cradle Song" and "The Kingdom of God," it has a simple outline, but, within this outline, a fertile content and warm luminosity. The characters, all highly distinct and actable, are also in outline; they are type characters which the actors intensify and vary, and within which they create a pressure of vitality and animation that brings them alive. What we get, then, is both type and individual, easily understood without and as easily deepened within.

Señorita Catalina Barcena gave the most lovely, fluent and complete performance of such a role that I have ever seen in the theater. I do not know what she would do with a part where there was need for more formality, elegance, style or recitation. In this folk part, her variety is remarkable; her honesty and beauty of method, her range and quality of voice, her effect of the pure heart and naïve mind and sturdy body, with gentleness, simplicity and pathos, cannot be overpraised.

I have been wondering what it is that preserves such a theme as that of this Spanish play from wreck and ruin in slush and sentimentality and cant. In our English theater, only the greatest talent could keep this motive of honesty and devotion and goodness from sinking into canting sentimentality, into talk about service, self-conscious and in bad taste, or idly sweet and false. I have decided that the difference turns on the conception of goodness. In "The Road to Happiness," the idea of goodness does not imply an ego and an interest in one's psychological development. Goodness is thought of not in relation to your own perfection, but in relation to other people. Life grows in goodness not by your being saved, but by its natural sweetness, common exchange and piety.

I have seen few scenes more touching than that in "The Road to Happiness," where the girl lets the whining, deformed youth kiss her hand and sends him off to bed, bluntly and pitifully, as she might a sick, irritable child. Those people talking to one another at the inn have only the desire to pass the time together with the mutual curiosity and comfort of animals. And there is nothing strange or sweetish in the picture of the young girl sitting at the old man's feet when the first curtain rises and the last falls. You perceive that the scenes' idea is the most natural in the world to these players; it is life sitting at the feet of life, grave sweetness, natural piety in the classic sense of the word.

STARK YOUNG.

# The Heritage of Impressionism

THE impressionists have lately been restored to fashion. There was an exhibition of the original impressionists at Durand-Ruel's last winter; and it was accompanied quite spontaneously by an article in the London Nation and Athenæum, in which Mr. Clive Bell praised the *plein-airistes* as pure painters. Without accusing Mr. Bell of journalistic shallowness, one may at least admit that he has a flair for anticipating the spring styles. Does this mean that post-impressionism is dead? Not at all: it rather shows that impressionism and post-impressionism, which were once successive episodes, have both become part of that "perpetual present" in which art lives and moves.

What made impressionism fall out of fashion, and what has made it acceptable again? If one could answer this question correctly, one could tell a little, perhaps, about the spiritual history of the last generation.

In the beginning, impressionism was only a visual discovery. It scraped off a palette that had become muddy with studio dust and repeated mixtures, and, leaving the artificial and filtered daylight of the studio behind it, sought the sunlight and the open air. The impressionist abandoned the conventions by which solid objects were represented: instead of painting a tree, he painted the effect of a tree, and, for the first time, gave full value to the transforming quality of sunlight. In the studio or on a dull day grass is

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green; but in the sunlight grass is blue, lavender, yellow, or orange. Realizing this fact, impressionism becomes a sort of picnic in paint: in the canvases of Monet or Sisley one is conscious of a world dissolved into colors, trembling in that almost hypnotic state where separate objects become mystically one, where there is no near or far, no light or dark, and where, instead of contrasts, there is only the fusion of complementary colors. Impressionism was plainly the work of happy men. One might call these painters the primitives of science, for they accepted the world of nature without the intervention of fable and myth, and they discovered their own moods reflected in sunlit surfaces, and in shadows that were as brilliant as sunlight.

This spontaneous love of color and sunlight for their own sake could not last forever. Even the happiest of picnics must come to an end, and a life of picnics would be a tedious one. Renoir never forgot the impressionist palette, but he went on to more definite and mature masteries of form; Monet, however, did not advance beyond his own formula, and the lesser men who brought the practice within an academic frame were merely taking over a stale method, as their contemporaries took an even staler one from Bouguereau. Apart from the development of art itself, the milieu had changed: clouds gathered: the next generation withdrew from the picnic of impressionism as an irritable invalid might slink beyond the range of some boisterous good-liver. The impressionists had recorded the naïve satisfaction of happy days: the animal warmth of sunlight, the soft intoxication of spray-drenched sea-air or humid hay-laden breezes. Paintings like Renoir's "The Wave," or Pissarro's "Place du Havre," at the Chicago Institute of Art, represent a sort of visual mysticism; they record the primitive beatitude of light and color, with something of the gratitude that might be felt by one who had just recovered his sight.

Impressionism was of the morning; post-impressionism, to put it broadly, was of the gathering twilight. The post-impressionists were aware of the intellectual difficulties that were involved in this optimism of the open air; not the least of these difficulties was the fact that the sun did not always shine; shadows were sometimes hard and cold as well as vibrant; objects became as definite as parts of a syllogism; and not all the evils of life could be eliminated by a picnic and a country walk. For the post-impressionist, a somber palette became a spiritual necessity: the dark, purple-edged fruit of Cézanne, the blue period of Picasso, the resolute grays of Derain, the muds that characterized many of the modern painters before the War, all had their special message—but whatever that message was, it was not a joyous one. Picasso's guitar player, in the remarkable Birch Bartlett collection in Chicago, is as cadaverous in color as in physiognomy; and if the blue was due to Picasso's necessity to buy only the cheapest colors, it was no less an emblem of an underlying misery and dissonance.

Now the post-impressionist period had both intellectual energy and candor; it pursued the abstract research into form, under the banner of Cubism, with a zeal that recalled Seurat's equally scientific researches into color; it restored the classic sense of structure, which the impressionists had lost, and it found new meanings in the geometrical accuracy of David or the purposive distortions of El Greco. Such a period of cloistered research has many virtues; and one must not be put off by the manifestos and broadsides and egocentric audacities that accompanied this retreat. The artist, of all men, is driven by an inarticulate necessity, which is none the less real or responsive to the environment around him, because it is not "realistic" or directly expressive of social purpose. The mechanization of the environment, the frustration of human aims, the haunting neuroses that grip the modern soul, and the great release of tension that characterized the Great War itself—all these things were recorded on canvas long before they were commented upon in our journals.

Throughout this period the work of the great masters, Van Gogh, Seurat, Redon, Renoir, Matisse, recorded, too, that immense joy in living which finds in painting one of its chief modes of expression; but the prevailing tone was of a joylessness and emptiness, which sought to console itself by a magnification of mechanical interests, and by a concentration, as it were, upon the physics of design. The earlier mood of impressionism, in contrast, was fatally healthy. Does not this fact account, perhaps, for the bitterness which crept into controversy when the work of the impressionists was recalled? It was necessary to exaggerate the weaknesses of Monet's design, in order to conceal the wholeness of his moods.

The War is a convenient dividing point; and it effected something of a catharsis; but in art the fight was pretty well over before a single gun was fired on the battlefield. The end of the period of research was in sight when the painters who were frustrated by their own emptiness sought to pass beyond the limits of painting: when Kandinsky sought to turn painting into visual music, the artist could go no further without, like Archipenko, abandoning the brush entirely. Among those who regard painting as a sequence of fashions, the last ten years may seem a period of faltering and recession: Picasso and Matisse, for example, have both gone back to the fully modeled or "classic" human form. But there is much reason to think that these ten years have been a period when the price of the battle has been calculated, and some of the gains have been consolidated. Abstract art—that is, art in which the meaning does not depend upon the accurate representation of objects—is now firmly established; but abstraction itself is only a method: a picture is not a neutral arrangement of lines and spaces, like a Greek fret: it is such an arrangement as will produce a definite spiritual effect, and it is successful only when it stimulates in the beholder an immediate feeling of the painter's own capacities and reactions. If the effect is void, no mastery of technique will justify it; if the effect is genuine and the synthesis an exhilarating one, almost any means, from a palette knife to a camera, can be justified.

In the later works of Matisse, one finds a realization of all the dimensions of painting—color, abstract design, beautiful natural forms; and I felt the same sort of assurance in looking at Mr. Walter Pach's recent exhibition at the Kraushaar Galleries. Mr. Pach's palette is as clear and brilliant as the impressionist's; his portrait of Miss Mary Morris has, in color, the emotional range Miss Morris herself had as the heroine of "Desire Under the Elms": one turns from this portrait to the variations in green Mr. Pach has used in his portrait of a child with a comprehension of

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all that color can immediately convey in the interpretation of a thoroughly felt subject. At the same time, the structure is solid: it has, in paint, the firmness of the buildings Mr. Pach has so well etched—the Barclay-Vesey Building and The Shelton; it would be hard for an artist who had not learned the lessons of Cubism to arrive at anything like this firmness. In sum, Mr. Pach has taken advantage of all the resources the modern tradition has provided; and in pictures like "On a Terrace" there is an absence of strain which gives me the feeling that something worth fighting for has been won. Here is an art that is whole; but, unlike the mediocre academic painter, Mr. Pach has not purchased wholeness at the sacrifice of everything that makes painting an important activity. Impressionism lives; post-impressionism lives; cubism lives; and if the artist can now work with all of them—the color of the impressionist, the depth of the post-impressionist, the clean logic of the cubist—that is not altogether an unhappy sign. LEWIS MUMFORD.

# CORRESPONDENCE

## A Catholic President?

SIR: The general fairness of your editorial, "A Catholic President?" has aroused my admiration, as have very many articles published in the New Republic. No person with a just mind can contradict your statement that "To all appearances it is, of course, an outrageous anachronism in a republic like the United States . . . that a man whose religious faith is shared by over 20,000,000 of his fellow citizens should find this religion a disqualification for the presidency."

When, however, you say, apropos of the fear of divided loyalty: "For the most part, such suspicions are, of course, wholly unreasonable," I venture the opinion that your statement is not altogether accurate.

I had a warm personal friend, a loyal Catholic who had been educated, at least in part, for the priesthood. One day, when we happened in casual conversation to mention a certain petty legal offense, he surprised me by saying: "Well, you see, the teaching of the Church is this. The Church is universal. It belongs to one country no more than to another. Therefore, the first obedience of a Catholic is toward the Church. If the laws of the country in which he lives conflict, then he must give them secondary consideration."

In view of my friend's intimate knowledge of Catholic teachings, I accepted his statement as authentic.

HENRY HYDE.

New York City.

SIR: I have read your editorial, "A Catholic President?" and thank you for it.

The reluctance of the American people to consider a Roman Catholic for the most powerful executive office in the world, the presidency of the United States, arises from sound political wisdom, based on the lessons of history. Your "average middle-class burgher"—he need *not* be a Protestant necessarily—asks two questions: Do the Roman Catholics believe the political principles which they teach? If given the power to put these principles into practice in a state, would they do it?

History answers both of these questions in the affirmative, and so does your thinking American.

TALCOTT MINER BANKS.

SIR: In your issue of May 4, B. R. J., of Kansas, opposes Al Smith for President. B. R. J. thinks Al suited to be President on every count except one—he would be influenced by his religious ideas. Should we, then, have for President a man who is not influenced by his religious ideas? That seems to me a risky business, since, if a man has religious ideas, I should think it likely that he would be influenced by them. Better not try that. Which reminds me of the man who maintained that the troubles of Ireland all came from the bitter quarrel between Catholics and Protestants. How much better, he said, if they would all turn atheists —then they might behave like Christians. Maybe it would solve the difficulty if Al should turn atheist, and so rid himself of the insidious influence of religious ideas. But, on second thought, that won't do either. Atheism is an idea strongly tinctured with a religious flavor: it is only an ordinary religious idea running on reverse English. After all, ideas of any sort are a nuisance, precisely for the reason that B. R. J. suggests—it is so extremely difficult not to be influenced by them. In fact, I am influenced by an idea at the present moment. It is this: let us elect a President without any ideas. It has been done. It can be done again. Easy!

CARL BECKER.

Ithaca, New York.

## Mr. Gorman and "Ulysses"

SIR: It is perhaps rather late to refer to the issue of the New Republic of April 6, but Mr. Gorman's scholarly exegesis of "Ulysses" cannot be assimilated hastily.

It is to be hoped (and it is perhaps not unreasonable to suppose) that Mr. Gorman contemplates bringing out a polychrome edition of "Ulysses," with concordance, marginal references and graphic aids, so that the reader may obtain a synoptic view of the pattern of the work unconfused by irrelevant elements of interest. One of the obstacles to the proper enjoyment of "Ulysses" is its unfortunate popular appeal; it contains a number of scenes not above the comprehension of the man in the street. There is a good deal of bar-room talk capable of affording the same vulgar pleasure that some persons derive from Ring Lardner. There is a cinematographic picture of a Dublin afternoon which lustily sings the animal joys of multitudinous life. In the last chapter, the proper esthetic, or rather cerebral, reaction is inhibited by sheer astonishment at its stark literalness as a record of a woman's reverie.

In fact, it is for Mr. Gorman to clear "Ulysses" of the serious charge of being representative art and of possessing what is vulgarly called "human interest." Much of the book has the appearance of being a literal transcription of actual conversations—a feat of mnemotechnic, surpassing, no doubt, but not very different in kind from the reportorial achievements of Sinclair Lewis. Mr. Joyce has been accused of "documentation," and his reputation has been slightly damaged by the loud praise of admirers of realism.

Mr. Gorman has outstripped with rapid strides those who agreed with his earlier statement that "this [higher criticism] may be an interesting sport but hardly one that will enhance the value of the book." In accepting his later mandate to an undertaking no less monumental than the hermeneutic labors of the Kabbalists, Mr. Gorman has rescued James Joyce from the Modern Library and the Little Blue Books, and has earned the gratitude of all serious readers who have invested their time and staked their reputations on Mr. Joyce's fame.

H. W. ELIOT, JR.

Chicago, Illinois.

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# Two Women

*Emily Davies and Girton College, by Lady Stephen. London: Constable. 21s.*

*Letters of Lady Augusta Stanley. Edited by the Dean of Windsor and Hector Bolitho. London: Gerald Howe. 18s.*

UP to the beginning of the nineteenth century, the distinguished woman had almost invariably been an aristocrat. It was the great lady who ruled and wrote letters, and influenced the course of politics. From the huge middle class, few women rose to eminence, nor has the drabness of their lot received the attention which has been bestowed on the splendors of the great and the miseries of the poor. There they remain, even in the early part of the nineteenth century, a vast body, living, marrying, bearing children, in dull obscurity, until at last we begin to wonder whether there was something in their condition itself—in the age at which they married, the number of children they bore, the privacy they lacked, the incomes they had not, the conventions which stifled them and the education they never received—which so affected them that, though the middle class is the great reservoir from which we draw our distinguished men, it has thrown up singularly few women to set beside them.

The profound interest of Lady Stephen's life of Miss Emily Davies lies in the light it throws upon this dark and obscure chapter of human history. Miss Davies was born in the year 1830, of middle-class parents who could afford to educate their sons but not their daughters. Her education was, she supposed, much the same as that of other clergymen's daughters at that time. "Do they go to school? No. Do they have governesses at home? No. They have lessons and get on as they can." But if their positive education had stopped at a little Latin, a little history, a little housework, it would not so much have mattered. It was what may be called the negative education, that which decrees not what you may do, but what you may not do, that cramped and stifled. "Probably only women who have labored under it can understand the weight of discouragement produced by being perpetually told that, as women, nothing much is ever expected of them. . . . Women who have lived in the atmosphere produced by such teaching know how it stifles and chills; how hard it is to work courageously through it." Preachers and rulers of both sexes, nevertheless, formulated the creed and enforced it vigorously. Charlotte Yonge wrote, "I have no hesitation in declaring my full belief in the inferiority of woman, nor that she brought it upon herself." She reminded her sex of a painful incident with a snake in a garden, which had settled their destiny, Miss Yonge said, forever. The mention of Woman's Rights made Queen Victoria so furious that "she cannot contain herself." Mr. Greg, underlining his words, wrote that "the essentials of a woman's being are *that they are supported by, and they minister to, men.*" The only other occupation allowed them, indeed, was to become a governess or a needlewoman, "and both these employments were naturally overstocked." If women wanted to paint, there was, up to the year 1858, only one life class in London where they could learn. If they were musical, there was the inevitable piano, but the chief aim was to produce a brilliant mechanical execution, and Trollope's picture of four girls all in the same room playing on four pianos, all of them out of tune, seems to have been, as Trollope's pictures usually are, based on fact. Writing was the most accessible of the arts, and write they did, but their books were deeply influenced by the angle from which they were forced to observe the world. Half occupied, always interrupted, with much leisure but little time to themselves and no money of their own, these armies of listless women were either driven to find solace and occupation in religion or, if that failed, they took, as Miss Nightingale said, "to that perpetual day-dreaming which is so dangerous." Some, indeed, envied the working classes, whose women were forced to work, and Miss Martina frankly hailed the ruin of her family with delight. "I, who had been obliged to write before breakfast, or in some private way, had henceforth liberty to do my own work in my own way, for we had lost our gentility." But the time had come when there were occasional exceptions, both among parents and among daughters. Mr. Leigh Smith, for example, allowed his daughter Barbara the same income that he gave his sons. She at once started a school of an advanced character. Miss Garrett became a doctor because her parents, though shocked and anxious, would be reconciled if she were a success. Miss Davies had a brother who sympathized and helped her in her determination to reform the education of women. With such encouragement, the three young women started, in the middle of the nineteenth century, to lead the army of the unemployed in search of work. But the war of one sex upon the rights and possessions of the other is by no means a straightforward affair of attack and victory or defeat. Neither the means nor the end itself is clear-cut and recognized. There is the very potent weapon, for example, of feminine charm—what use were they to make of that? Miss Garrett said she felt "so mean in trying to come over the doctors by all kinds of little feminine dodges." Mrs. Gurney admitted the difficulty, but pointed out that "Miss Marsh's success among the navvies" had been mainly won by these means, which, for good or for bad, were certainly of immense weight. It was agreed, therefore, that charm was to be employed. Thus we have the curious spectacle, at once so diverting and so humiliating, of grave and busy women doing fancy-work and playing croquet in order that the male eye might be gratified and deceived. "Three lovely girls" were placed conspicuously in the front row at a meeting, and Miss Garrett herself sat there looking "exactly like one of the girls whose instinct it is to do what you tell them." For the arguments that they had to meet by these devious means were in themselves extremely indefinite. There was a thing called "the tender home-bloom of maidenliness" which must not be touched. There was chastity, of course, and her handmaidens innocence, sweetness, unselfishness, sympathy; all of which might suffer if women were allowed to learn Latin and Greek. The Saturday Review gave cogent expression to what men feared for women and needed of women in the year 1864. The idea of submitting young ladies to local university examinations "almost takes one's breath away," the writer said. If examined they must be, steps must be taken to see that "learned men advanced in years" were the examiners, and that the presumably aged wives of these aged gentlemen should occupy "a commanding position in the gallery." Even so, it would be "next to impossible to persuade the world that a pretty first-class woman came by her honors fairly." For the truth was, the reviewer wrote, that "there is a strong and ineradicable male instinct that a learned, or even an accomplished young woman is the most intolerable monster in creation." It was against instincts and prejudices such as these, tough as roots but intangible as sea mist, that Miss Davies had to fight. Her days passed in a round of the most diverse occupations. Besides the actual labor of raising money and fighting prejudice, she had to decide the most delicate moral

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questions, which, directly victory was within sight, began to be posed by the students and their parents. A mother, for example, would only entrust her with her daughter's education on condition that she should come home "as if nothing had happened" and not "take to anything eccentric." The students, on the other hand, bored with watching the Edinburgh express slip a carriage at Hitchin, or rolling the lawn with a heavy iron roller, took to playing football, and then invited their teachers to see them act scenes from Shakespeare and Swinburne, dressed in men's clothes. This, indeed, was a very serious matter; the great George Eliot was consulted; Mr. Russell Gurney was consulted, and also Mr. Tomkinson. They decided that it was unwomanly; Benedict must be played in a skirt.

Miss Davies herself was decidedly austere. When money for the college flowed in, she refused to spend it on luxuries. She wanted rooms—always more and more rooms to house those unhappy girls dreaming their youth away in indolence, or picking up a little knowledge in the family sitting-room. "Privacy was the one luxury Miss Davies desired for the student, and in her eyes it was not a luxury —she despised luxuries—but a necessity." But a room to themselves was enough. She did not believe that they needed arm-chairs to sit in or pictures to look at. She herself lived austerely in lodgings till she was seventy-two, combative, argumentative, frankly preferring a labor meeting at Venice to the pictures and the palaces, consumed with an abstract passion for justice to women, which burnt up trivial personalities and made her a little intolerant of social frivolities. Was it worth while, she once asked, in her admirable caustic manner, after meeting Lady Augusta Stanley, to go among the aristocracy? "I felt directly that if I went to Lady Stanley's again, I must get a new bonnet. And is it well to spend one's money in bonnets and flys instead of on instructive books?" she wondered. For Miss Davies, perhaps, was a little deficient in feminine charm.

That was a charge that nobody could bring against Lady Augusta Stanley. No two women could, on the surface, have less in common. Lady Augusta, it is true, was no more highly educated, in a bookish sense, than the middle-class women whom Miss Davies championed. But she was the finest flower of the education which, for some centuries, the little class of aristocratic women had enjoyed. She had been trained in her mother's drawing-room in Paris. She had talked to all the distinguished men and women of her time—Lamartine, Mérimée, Victor Hugo, the Duc de Broglie, Sainte-Beuve, Renan, Jenny Lind, Turgenev—everybody came to talk to old Lady Elgin, and to be entertained by her daughters. There she developed that abounding sensibility, that unquenchable sympathy, which were to be so lavishly drawn upon in after years. For she was very young when she entered the Duchess of Kent's household. For fifteen years of her youth she lived there. For fifteen years she was the life and soul of that "quiet, affectionate, dull household of old people at Frogmore and Clarence House." Nothing whatever happened. They drove out, and she thought how charming the village children looked. They walked, and the Duchess picked heather. They came home, and the Duchess was tired. Yet not for a moment, pouring her heart out in profuse letters to her sisters, does she complain or wish for any other existence.

Seen through her peculiar magnifying-glass, the slightest event in the life of the Royal Family was either harrowing in the extreme, or beyond words delightful. Prince Arthur was more handsome than ever. The Princess Helena was so lovely. Princess Ada fell from her pony. Prince Leo was naughty. The Beloved Duchess wanted a green umbrella. The measles had come out, but, alas, they threatened to go in again. One might suppose, to listen to Lady Augusta exclaiming and protesting, in alternate rapture and despair, that to read aloud to the old Duchess of Kent was the most exciting of occupations, and that the old lady's rheumatisms and headaches were catastrophes of the first order. For inevitably the power of sympathy, when so highly developed and discharged solely upon personal relations, tends to produce a hothouse atmosphere in which domestic details assume gigantic proportions and the mind feeds upon every detail of death and disease with a gluttonous relish. The space devoted in this volume to illness and marriage utterly outweighs any reference to art, literature or politics. It is all as personal, emotional and detailed as one of the novels which were written so inevitably by women.

It was such a life as this and such an atmosphere as this that Mr. Greg and the Saturday Review, and many men who had themselves enjoyed the utmost rigors of education, wished to see preserved. And perhaps there was some excuse for them. It is difficult to be sure, after all, that a college don is the highest type of humanity known to us; and there is something in Lady Augusta's power to magnify the common and illumine the dull which seems to imply a very arduous education of some sort behind it. Nevertheless, as one studies the lives of the two women side by side, one cannot doubt that Miss Davies got more interest, more pleasure and more use out of one month of her life than Lady Augusta out of a whole year of hers. Some inkling of the fact seems to have reached Lady Augusta herself, even at Windsor Castle. Perhaps being a woman of the old type is a little exhausting; perhaps it is not altogether satisfying. Lady Augusta, at any rate, seems to have got wind of other possibilities. She liked the society of literary people best, she said. "I had always said that I had wished to be a fellow of a college," she added. She was one of the first to support Miss Davies in her demand for a university education for women. Did Miss Davies then sacrifice her book and buy her bonnet? Did the two women, so different in every other way, come together over this—the education of their sex? It is tempting to think so, and to imagine, sprung from that union of the middle-class woman and the court lady, some astonishing phoenix of the future who shall combine the new efficiency with the old amenity, the courage of the indomitable Miss Davies and Lady Augusta's charm. VIRGINIA WOOLF.

# Dictatorship, Red or White

*Utopia in Chains, by Morris Gordin. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 272 pages. $2.50.*

*Italy and Fascismo, by Don Sturzo, with a preface by Gilbert Murray. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 305 pages. $3.75.*

*Fascism, by Giuseppe Prezzolini, translated by Kathleen MacMillan. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 201 pages. $2.50.*

RUSSIA and Italy—two countries totally unlike—are yet both practising modern forms of dictatorship. How can we appraise their revolutionary development? These books use different methods in solving the problem, and give us different answers.

Morris Gordin is a Russian Jew who came to the United States in 1912. By 1915 he was to be found in the ranks of the radical clothing workers, who were on strike in Chicago. In 1917 he was apparently a devotee of the Allied cause, serving in the American army and receiving an honor-

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able discharge in 1919. As a full-fledged Communist, he left for Russia two years later. In 1926 he returned to the United States to publish his "magnum opus" against Bolshevism.

His book is an explosive attack against Russian Communism, written, as he says, "with the blood of a disappointed heart." Gordin, even to the extent that he may be sincere, is too sentimental and emotional to write accurately. The book purports to be a description of his personal experiences. If Gordin could have had the services of a skilled psychiatrist before he left America, the volume might never have been written. To read his own dreams and fancies about "Utopian Russia" before he returned there is to recognize his mental aberrations. He was "crazy with joy" that the World Revolution had begun. He saw many visions of the new socialistic "Jerusalem." He heard voices calling *him* "to shine in the immortal diadem of the Revolution." *En route* to Russia he spent dollars like water, even hiring a special train to take him to Riga. Crossing the border, he wished "to kiss with his lips the Holy Land of the Soviet Republic."

Ordinarily, a record of personal experiences is a valuable aid in appraising international truth. Unfortunately, a man who is suffering from a delusion psychosis can scarcely be in a position to appraise facts scientifically. No wonder poor Gordin is bitterly disillusioned. He hates Bolshevism, its leaders, and all its works. Something in his picture may be true, but it is well-nigh impossible to find the point of truth in the haystack of reckless emotionalism.

The book by Don Sturzo is very different. The author, the founder of the Catholic party *Popolare* which opposed Fascism, was driven out of Italy by Mussolini. Considering the circumstances, the remarkable restraint which characterizes his treatment is commendable. In contrast to Gordin, he omits nearly all reference to his own experiences. He analyzes the causes which led up to the negation of the Italian Constitution, and the successive steps in the revolution of the Fascist dictatorship, carrying the reader past "the march on Rome," through "the election of 1924," followed by the "Aventine and reaction," to the future trend of Europe and Italy.

Not the least valuable part is his comparison of modern Russia with Italy. Both are dictatorships, but in the case of the latter, support comes from the conservative classes: industrialists, big land-owners, clericals, the monarchy, and the political Fascisti who live for power. In the case of Communism, it is the proletarian class and the Bolsheviks who have won. Sturzo has the merit of seeing some good even in Fascism, whereas Gordin can see nothing but poison in Bolshevism.

The book by Guiseppe Prezzolini is more sketchy, far less scholarly, and apparently more hurriedly written than that by Sturzo, but in its conclusions reinforces the other volume. In comparing Italy with Russia he adds the significant comment that Communism is very much more unique, more experimental, more thorough-going in its changes, than Fascism, which retains monarch, Pope, and autocratic industrial power. An interesting chapter is added by the translator, bringing the evolution of Fascism down to 1926. We here see the complete downfall of a liberal parliamentary state and the legalization of violence and tyranny. Neither form of dictatorship, as pictured by Prezzolini, is particularly seductive. Communism, we have long been told, is a rule by one million Communists reinforced by two million in its youth organization. We have not generally realized that, as Prezzolini points out, the Fascist ruling class "does not exceed in all one thousand." In the final analysis, power is centralized in a single figure—Mussolini. He admittedly has suppressed freedom of the press and of assembly, and apparently has made a mockery of impartial justice. Still, conservative American leaders can welcome Fascism because, as Miss MacMillan says, "it has the type of capitalist regime calculated to awaken the sympathies of all the ruling capitalist groups."

Someone, sooner or later, will write an authoritative volume depicting the contrasts and the likenesses between Bolshevism and Fascism and the extraordinary difference in the treatment accorded the two dictatorships by the rest of Christendom.

JEROME DAVIS.

# Miss Hull and Mrs. Scott

*Islanders, by Helen Hull. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.*

*Migrations, by Evelyn Scott. New York: A. and C. Boni. $2.50.*

IN "Islanders," Miss Hull has projected her theme, carried by a powerfully simple character, upon the heterogeneous experience of an American family. Ellen Dacey, the pioneer woman, betrayed in her personal life by her lover's departure with the men of the community in a gold rush, spends her years, fifty, sixty of them, in the service of those nearest to her—her mother and brother left to her care, her father returning broken by hardship, her nephews and grand-niece and nephews. Hers is not renunciation in the old sense, but a passionate effort to share her experience with others and complete herself by union with them. Disappointed, frustrated, defeated, betrayed by the fact of her sex, she finds at last in her grand-niece Anne a spirit akin to her own, to carry on the quest, to follow the gleam.

Miss Hull starts with the theme. Her problem is to find the stuff of life which will literally incarnate this idea so that, in George Eliot's words, it will seem to have revealed itself to the author in the flesh and not in the spirit. The danger that the material will be too generalized she avoids by keeping her story strictly within the limits of Ellen's experience. Another more obvious danger, that the characters will be conscious of the thesis and in conspiracy with the author to carry it out, threatens her at times. One wonders whether Ellen would have thought of women's lives under the figure of islands if she had not read Arnold's line: "Yes, in this sea of life enisled." But, by and large, Miss Hull has accomplished a piece of creative realism—the substance of life revealed and interpreted by imagination.

Mrs. Scott starts with her material, which is also that of an American family. The brothers, Thomas and Edwin George, sons of a ruined planter in Tennessee before the Civil War, marry sisters. Thomas and Melinda make their way by the isthmus of Panama to San Francisco in the early days of the gold rush. One may suppose that the minute account of their journey was some inherited chronicle, supplemented by the account of Edwin and Fredonia in Mimms, and their friends, Geoffrey Gilbert and his quadroon wife, who are caught in an outbreak of race hatred. Here we touch the margin of a purpose, but Mrs. Scott remains stoically objective. Not a note of feeling, not a sign of meaning. Her novel is compact of description, characterization, and incident—obviously and intentionally fragmentary. But each fragment is presented with a sharpness of notation, a fullness of specification, that seems to give the reader immediate observation and participation in

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the action. The problem in a novel of this type has usually been conceived as the discovery of a theme, or the revelation of a significance in the phenomena of life, but this Mrs. Scott, with an intention as resolute as Miss Hull's, refuses to give. She repudiates any meaning in experience as defiantly as she denies any pattern of unity to her narrative, which she calls "an arabesque of histories." And yet this negation reveals a deeper source of pessimism than isolation in the utterly fortuitous character of human association.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

# A Better Plan for Farm Relief

*Balancing the Farm Output, by W. J. Spillman. New York: Orange Judd Publishing Company. 126 pages. $1.25.*

IN this simply written little volume, the Agricultural Economist of the United States Department of Agriculture unofficially addresses himself to the problem of how the American farmer can be relieved from his present unfortunate situation. In its course, he presents a new plan, which deserves attention as a possibly more practical substitute for the McNary-Haugen scheme.

In the first place, he makes a distinction between minor and major crops. A farmer who is at the same time raising both can easily adjust his production of minor crops, because, if acreage is taken from a crop whose national aggregate product is comparatively small, and given to one whose product is large, a sizeable percentage reduction of the minor crop will make only an inconsiderable percentage increase in the major crop. If farmers will be guided by the yearly report of the Department as to the agricultural outlook for the various crops, and by the later reported intentions to plant, they may then adjust their minor crop acreages with some relation to the probable demand and supply. Experience shows that, as a matter of fact, these two reports do influence planting. All that is necessary is to secure for them wider attention. Mr. Spillman suggests that this be done through a voluntary Farmers' Statistical Service, organized around the local school districts with the aid of the county agents.

The major crops, however, present a far more difficult problem, since there now appears to be a large surplus in every one of them, and not enough acreage can be transferred to minor crops to make an appreciable difference. It is not easy to put this acreage into forest or pasture, while depopulation of the farms over a long period will furnish no permanent solution, so long as there remains plenty of good land to be taken up at low prices the moment agricultural conditions improve.

Most of the remedies hitherto suggested have the fatal defect that the price increases they involve would stimulate production, an event which in turn would drive prices down. Similar plans operated in other countries work either because they are applied to portions of a crop which do not bulk large in the world market, or because scarcity of land prevents much increase in production, or because some other restriction of production is applied. In the case of the British rubber valorization, for instance, the export tax limits production, because the rubber is not used where it was grown, but has to be sold through export if at all. Nevertheless, if the plan greatly increases production in other regions than the British colonies, it will in the end defeat itself.

Mr. Spillman's plan for this country aims to avoid stimulating production by paying a protective bounty only on a fixed amount of the crop—that amount which finds its way into domestic markets.

A national commission would, through an elaborate system of local records and checking up, discover how much each farmer sold of any protected crop in a given year. Each farmer would then be allotted a percentage of that part of the crop consumed in this country, based on his production. This allotment would be made the basis of his subsequent sharing in the tariff bounty.

All dealers in the products in question would be licensed and bonded by the Commission. Each would be required, in advance of making any purchase, to buy from the Commission debentures equal to the amount of the protective duty on the prospective purchase. He would deliver these debentures to the farmer, in addition to the prevailing price at the farm. Domestic consumers of wheat buying from the dealer would have to pay enough to recompense him for purchasing the debentures, in addition to what they would otherwise pay. Exporters also would pay this price, but when the wheat had actually been sold in a foreign country and had left the United States they would be recompensed by the Commission for the tariff they had paid. The sum paid to exporters by the Commission would be subtracted from the total receipts of the Commission, and the remainder, after deducting the expenses of administration, would be distributed to the farmers according to their allotments. Thus each farmer would receive his proportion of the tariff paid by domestic consumers, while production for export would move into the market at the world price. There would be no incentive to increase production for export.

This highly ingenious plan looks economically workable, and it is justifiable, if any tariff is justifiable. Whether its many administrative complexities would furnish an insuperable obstacle is another matter. Mr. Spillman devotes some attention to these, and maintains that effective devices against bootlegging or deception would be possible. The plan is worthy of careful study.

GEORGE SOULE.

# Mr. Chapman's Dante

*Dante, by John Jay Chapman. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 99 pages. $2.50.*

THIS volume contains a translation of thirteen cantos of the "Divine Comedy," with a brief commentary by Mr. Chapman. "Translators," says Mr. Chapman, "are slashed, maimed, and borne bleeding from the field after a duel with Dante." This is true; but why is it true? Why does Dante seem to be the most difficult of all poets to render satisfactorily in English? Why do the translations invariably appear so barren and so colorless? We do not wonder that those who have read Dante only in these translations should not infrequently come to the conclusion that his reputation is an imposture. Dante's genius for evoking sights and sounds and for conveying vivid emotions is one of the most extraordinary in literature. But where have they all evaporated to, when we look for them in the translation? Where are the darkness, the discordant voices and the suffocation of Hell; the earthly freshness and color of Purgatory; the cumulative brightness of Paradise? If we go back to the original and try to put our finger on the words which convey these effects, we begin to understand what has happened to them. The difficulty lies in the fewness of the words which Dante uses to evoke his visions (Mr. Chapman himself speaks of "the unseizable rapidity of Dante's

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poetic strokes"): the absence of elaborate descriptions, the economy of adjectives; in his incomparable gift for finding language for the terse statements of a straightforward narrative, which, though in translation they sound far too terse, and impressive, if impressive at all, only through austerity—shall stain it with the deepest color and make it glow with the fiercest emotion. Let me cite a few examples from passages which Mr. Chapman has translated, setting beside them the translator's versions:

*Siede la terra dove nata fui*
*Su la marina—*
The land where I was born sits by the shore—

The words have the naïveté and the softness which are characteristic of Francesca and they have also the sound of a sigh. But in the translation the sigh has disappeared, because it was conveyed by the wistful *"fui,"* which simply means "was," standing at the end of the line.

*La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante.*
Utterly trembling, pressed his lips to mine.

This line has all the suddenness, the impact, the sound, and almost the feeling, of the kiss. But what it says is simply, "He kissed my mouth all trembling"; the effect is in the rush of the movement, the crowded syllables and the alliteration on b, t and m.

*"Or ci attristiam nella belletta negra."*
*Quest'inno si gorgoglian nella strozza—*
Pegged in the slime, they utter gurgling cries . . .
"Our hearts were ever smoky: now our gloom
Is meted us in black and stinking clay."

In *"nella belletta negra,"* which means simply "in the black slime," Dante has made us feel something of the sensation of stepping in a mud-hole at the same time that he makes us hear the sound of bubbles from the bed of a marsh; and in *gorgoglian nella strozza*—"they gurgle in their gullets"—(which sets up a whole succession of rhymes in ozza and ezza), he makes us hear the morose muttering of the *accidiosi.*

It is therefore impossible to render Dante by simply translating what he says. One would have to paraphrase him very freely—one would, ideally, have to write a different poem on the same subject. And Mr. Chapman makes precisely this point and proceeds on this principle. He insists that the trouble with the translators is that they have been intimidated by the Dante scholars and are afraid to take liberties with the text; and, though Mr. Chapman, as quoted above, is not particularly successful with Paolo and Francesca—by rearranging details, by shifting the emphasis and sometimes by altering the action, he has produced what are perhaps some of the most successful Dante translations ever made in English. Much of Dante—especially most of the color of Dante—has escaped him, as it did Cary, Longfellow and Norton; but that he should be able to carry over so much—especially so much of Dante's force and his accuracy of point—is remarkable.

"Back to the dogs!" he cried; then tenderly
About me both his arms he did enfold,
And kissed my cheek. "Disdainful soul," said he,
"Blessed is the womb that bare thee!—Yon proud knave
Left not one deed to glad his memory.
Therefore he raves, and must forever rave.
How many kings and princes of mankind
Shall stand like swine tomorrow in this wave" . . .

and,

And he to me, "I suffered nothing ill
At Ostia where the Tiber turns to brine" . . .

are excellent. And though he misses a pathetic effect in the story of Buonconte, similar to that which slipped through his fingers in the case of Francesca—Buonconte's crossing of his hands in death described in such slight simple words after the battle, the storm and the flood—he does admirably with the rushing swollen river, almost improving on the original, and ends the canto with quite the best version of la Pia that I remember to have seen.

As for Mr. Chapman's observations on Dante, some of them are extremely acute, but some seem to me to do Dante injustice. It is no doubt difficult to exaggerate Dante's egoism, but I do not think that Mr. Chapman ought to make it appear that the extravagant cordiality with which the poet is received by the spirits in Paradise is solely due to Dante's prestige among them: amiability and joy were a part of their happy state and did Dante no special honor. Furthermore, we are continually reminded—by Dante's blinded sight and his failing memory of his vision—of his human unworthiness and weakness. Nor do I think Dante so lacking in tenderness as Mr. Chapman makes him out: the Dante who appears in the poem, like all the other characters, is dramatized and treated objectively, and it is perhaps true that he does not often speak with tenderness (this is the artist's deliberate device); but the Dante who wrote the poem possessed the tenderness which created the marvelous pathos of the sinners, so varied and so variously afflicted, in Hell and Purgatory and the description of the innocent soul coming like a child from the hands of God, to be deformed by the corruption of the world. Nor can I agree with Mr. Chapman that Dante is never dramatic, but merely lyric: if Dante is lyric and not dramatic, then Mr. Chapman must attach to those terms very special and personal meanings. What seems to me, however, most serious is that, in his reaction against the Dante pedants who insist upon Dante's system at the expense of his poetry, Mr. Chapman tries to pretend that Dante's assignment of his characters to their places in his three different worlds is entirely arbitrary and dictated by artistic convenience. Why, asks Mr. Chapman, should Francesca be consigned to Hell when there are also sinners through carnality in Purgatory and in Heaven, and why should such sinners be tolerated in Purgatory and Heaven at all? Here it seems to me that Mr. Chapman misses one of the principal conceptions upon which the Divine Comedy rests: the sinners in the Inferno are those who have no control of themselves, who have forfeited *il ben dell' intelletto,* and their punishments are merely metaphors for their submergence in their sin; the sinners in Purgatory, expiating in many instances the same perversities which are punished in Hell, are those who have understood that they were sinning and have repented in time: their expiative ordeals are antidotes to their sins; and the souls in Heaven are those who have completely sloughed off their sin and thus attained divine peace and joy. Francesca is not simply a type of the unfortunate adulterous lover: she is a particular sort of woman, the sort of woman who responds to love-making spontaneously and helplessly, who is incapable, in this connection, of exercising judgment or will. She speaks in character as all Dante's people do, and her whole account takes its tone from her feeling of powerlessness: "Amor, che al cor gentil ratto s'apprende . . . Amor, che a nullo amato amar perdona . . .," etc.

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CONTENTS

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# SPREAD EAGLE

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On the other hand, Mr. Chapman's book is full of such just and pungent comments as the following: "Dante's frailty is the source of his power. Had he been truly a medieval theologian, or philosopher, or moralist, or historian, he would today be as dead as the rest of them. . . . [His philosophy] is full of whimsies and cobwebs, private significances and key-words; and there is no philosophic instrument of thought which he does not distort as he touches it—even as all poets do, and must do." "The conceptions of Greek mythology spring out of a Supermind which harmonizes the fantasies of childhood with the thought of mature age. They are embedded in the ganglia of the brain as music is: no explanation touches them. They defy analysis, and Dante himself fails to interpret them: his metaphysics will not stick to them." "To raise the question whether Dante was technically or virtually a heretic . . . is to miss the human and important point of the whole question. Dante's attitude toward the Empire and the Papacy was that of a super-autocrat who is above both of them, and holds a commission from on high to regulate the affairs of each." "The truth is that one must gather Dante's meanings, as one gathers the meanings of other men, by putting two and two together, not by drawing pictures of his Supposed Universe, and then hanging his phrases on them as on a Christmas Tree." "He had invented the *terza rima,* a form in which a continuous lyric can float and be indefinitely sustained upon the narrative below it." (One regrets that Mr. Chapman, who manages the *terza rima* so well, should not have kept to the rules as rigorously as his master: he permits himself quatrains, rhymed couplets and even alexandrines.) Taken as a whole, Mr. Chapman's book is one of the most distinguished contributions to the practice and the criticism of poetry made by any American this season. And his eloquent protest at the end against the modern scientific criticism of literature deserves general attention. EDMUND WILSON.

*Lud-in-the-Mist, by Hope Mirrlees. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.*

FROM so sophisticated a book as "Counterplot" to such unaffected romance as "Lud-in-the-Mist" presents on its shining surface is a far cry. One suspects a second intention, more subtly involved in the politics of Dorimare than in Mr. Cabell's Poictesme. But as someone has said of readers of "The Faerie Queene": "The allegory won't bite them." The story in itself is a lovely gossamer thing, fresh as dawn and fragrant as dew on flowers. R. M. L.

## Contributors

ERNEST MINOR PATTERSON is professor of economics in the Wharton School of Commerce and Finance, in the University of Pennsylvania.

LINTON WELLS is an American newspaper man who has recently returned from Central America. He is the author of "Around the World in Twenty-eight Days."

ERNEST HEMINGWAY, an American writer who lives in Paris, is the author of "Torrents of Spring," "In Our Time," and "The Sun Also Rises."

VIRGINIA WOOLF is an English novelist and critic. Her latest book, "To the Lighthouse," has just been published.

JEROME DAVIS, author of "The Russians and Ruthenians in America" and "The Russian Immigrant," has held the Gilbert L. Stark chair of practical philanthropy at Yale Divinity School since 1924.

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